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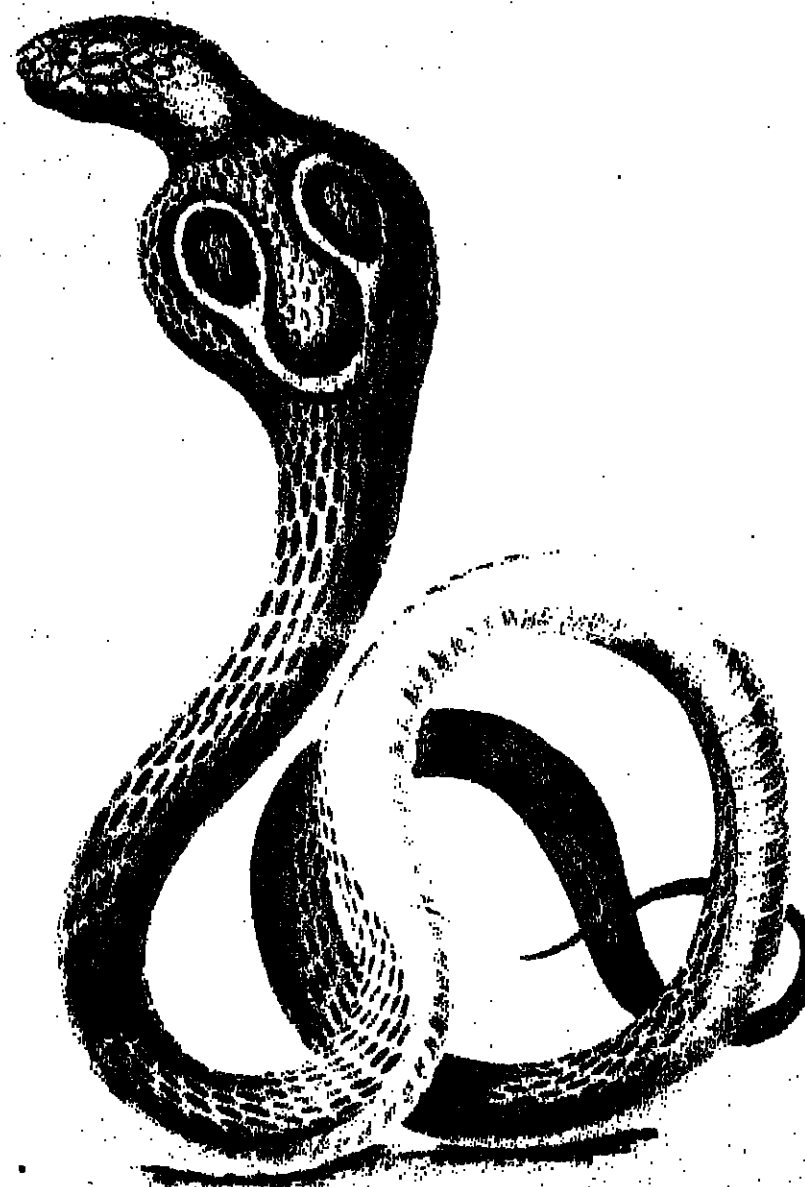
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Accounting for the horror

Ernest Gellner

ELISABETH YOUNG-BRUEHL

Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World 303pp. Yale University Press. £12.95. 0 300 02660 9

If Hannah Arendt had not existed, it would most certainly be necessary to invent her. Her life is a parable, not just of our age, but of several centuries of European thought and experience. Providence however has decided that Arendt should actually exist, so there is no need to invent her for the sake of the parable. All that needed to be done was to write her biography, which Elisabeth Young-Buehl has now done. The parable might have been more economically told, but the copious facts assembled here are not uninteresting.

Hannah Arendt was born in 1906. Curiously, this fact is not stated in the book; one has to deduce it by simple arithmetic, working back from the age attributed to her at the time of various events. (This is symptomatic of an occasional untidiness of presentation.)

But the biography does not begin then, it begins, most fittingly, in the Königsberg of the late eighteenth century. Max Arendt, Hannah's paternal grandfather, was descended on his mother's side from people who had already moved to Königsberg during the lifetime of Immanuel Kant and of Moses Mendelssohn who died in 1786. One of the excellent photographs in *Hannah Arendt* shows Königsberg in about 1900, and conveys something of the cold northern light and beauty of this Baltic port (see p845).

It was in Königsberg that the torch of the Enlightenment burned with its fiercest flame, in the thought and person of Immanuel Kant (who was a universal mind without ever having left the city); and it was there too that the Jewish followers of Moses Mendelssohn systematically transmitted the new secular European wisdom to the East European Jewish communities. The acceptance of the Enlightenment by them and by their Gentile neighbours meant that, eventually, political emancipation was to follow cultural and social fusion.

The full consequences of that emancipation, and of the ideas which warranted and required it, would not be enacted until nearly two centuries later, precisely within the span of

Arendt's life. She was destined to experience those delayed effects, to try to understand them, to be personally well placed for such an effort, and to acquire fame in the process. This is the parable which her life embodies.

But Königsberg too is part of the parable. In more than one sense, the city no longer exists. The place where the Prussian city of Königsberg once stood is now occupied by the Russian city of Kaliningrad. This is part not merely of the Soviet Union, but of the Russian Socialist Republic itself. The Russians are averse to discontinuous, colonial-type possessions, and voluntarily returned to the Finns the peninsula which controls entry to the Gulf of Finland and which had been annexed by them after 1945; but they are less averse to discontinuous possessions within the Soviet Union. Just as Crimea is neither Tartar nor Ukrainian but Russian, so the isolated pocket around Kaliningrad is politically attached to the Russian republic, and not to the neighbouring Lithuanian one.

What were those ideas, with their concealed time-bomb destined to blow a whole world to smithereens? In fact, of course, the Enlightenment was an attempt to modify and legitimate that totally new world which was emerging in Europe, its most conspicuous birthpangs being the Industrial and the French Revolutions. But that was not how the Enlightenment saw itself. It saw itself as the Revelation, rational rather than supernatural, of a universal human truth, valid for all men at all times. In Kant's version, the basic and sufficient elements of that truth are encapsulated in the mind of every rational man.

If this truth was so universally and easily accessible, why did it need to be revealed and taught? An awkward question (to which Hegelianism and other systems were soon to offer their solutions), but the rough answer seemed to be that, somehow or other, the manifest truth had been lost or obscured, having slumbered, though it had previously been available, at least in a kind of early proof edition, in some of the ideas of antiquity and in the ethical teachings of the great religions. (This enabled some of the preachers of the Enlightenment, such as Kant himself, to believe that they were not really cutting themselves off from their religious roots.) The central political implication of this vision was quite obvious: equal rights for all rational men.

So, as far as the Enlightenment itself was concerned, the implications were the same for everyone, Gentile or Jew. Hannah Arendt, in exile during the time that the killing took place, was to re-think and re-live those ideas in a personal and involved way. Königsberg/Kaliningrad is of course not the only city in Europe to symbolize the delayed explosive power of the ideas of the Enlightenment; but it is perhaps the one in which the symbolism is most conspicuous. In Hannah's childhood, the Arendt

family fled from Königsberg because the Russians were advancing on it: the Cossacks are coming! was the cry. As it happened, the Cossacks were turned back at Tannenberg and did not, on that occasion, arrive; had they made it, it would not have been by any means their first visit, though in the eighteenth century there had been no need to flee when they came. The Russians occupied Königsberg during the Seven Years' War, and it was actually the Russian Governor who confirmed Kant in his chair. *Cuius regio, eius cathedra*. When Frederick the Great recovered the town, Kant did not have to face any de-Russification tribunal. The age in which the Enlightenment ideas were formulated was more restrained than the one in which they were fully played out.

In the first generation in which the full impact of the Enlightenment was felt, some went one way and some another, and many temporized between the two extremes; inevitably ideological soon appeared ready to prove that a Middle Way existed which made the best of all worlds. There was a perfectly reasonable justification for leaving the minority community which was also a closed one, quite apart from the lure of advantage: the new emerging society was not merely due to be more rational than the *ancien régime* it was replacing, it was also destined to be more mobile, more open. This being so, the new order needed a shared cultural idiom, rather than a multiplicity of in-group jargons. It was only natural that this idiom should be that of the majority group, especially if it already contained a powerful literature of Enlightenment! So the dilemma which the Enlightenment imposed on its converts was somewhat more acute: for the members of the minority group, the situation was due to become much more serious with the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment.

"Romanticism" has many meanings, but the one that is relevant and important here is this: the Romantic reaction taught that a religion of humanity *an sich*, beyond all cultural

or ethnic specificity, led to a bloodless cosmopolitanism, and that the concrete, earthy, folksy cultures, with all their idiosyncrasies (especially their idiosyncrasies) were to be esteemed and preserved not simply as the convenient idioms for a universal truth, but as supremely valuable in themselves. This presents no great problem for the members of the majority culture, or for those who can enter it easily and unobtrusively; but it constitutes a virtually insoluble problem for the members of the minority group, who in the old order had occupied what is now seen to be an intolerably oppressive ghetto. They had not simply been excluded from the old order; on the contrary, they were a kind of negative part of it, a converse of all its values, its anti-image. The society had been Christian, and they had killed Christ. The society preached (whether or not it practised) anti-commercial values, and the minority group had lived by commerce. All this had been acceptable, or at any rate accepted, in an age of more or less closed communities which saw themselves from the inside rather than from the dominant viewpoint; but it became quite intolerable in a mobile, open society in which individuals on the move saw no reason to accept a collective stigma and were in constant communion with the dominant vision. To identify with the shared central idiom then became a natural aspiration.

Return to the old folk culture was of course an illusion, for anyone who indulged in it, whether of the majority or of the minority. The real difference was that the minority had no illusion of its own to return to. It had only the recollection of the ghetto, which by definition was not a self-sufficient community of culture at all, but an unromantically specialized, commercial sub-community of a wider world within which it was pejoratively defined. Although in fact a literary, populist nostalgia for the *shetl* does exist, Jewish populist Romanticism is in the end a contradiction in terms. Romanticism proposed a return to a pristine and homogeneous *Gemeinschaft*, within which spontaneous communication is possible whereas the Ghetto was an alien even if functional and specialized element in a plural society, incomplete in itself, a forcibly imposed and sustained

But the dilemma which the Enlightenment imposed on its converts was somewhat more acute: for the members of the minority group, the situation was due to become much more serious with the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment.

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counter-culture deliberately made morally discontinuous from the rest of society, and thus precluding *Gemeinschaft* with the latest self-sufficient social whole.

So the Romantic reaction placed the Jews in a far worse dilemma than the Enlightenment had done. They were largely deprived of the illusion of a possible return to their roots, an illusion indulged in by their Gentile neighbours with enthusiasm and conviction. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's *Gemeinschaft*. But, of course, one does. So what's to be done? The options which were logically open were either to infiltrate the others' *Gemeinschaft*, or to create a new one of one's own, whether or not there had been available peasants during the past two millennia, whose presence could define its culture. The second solution is known as Zionism, and of course did not appear on the scene until somewhat later.

Needless to say, these are the poles of the spectrum. In between, there was a whole range of intermediate and mixed positions, and no doubt many people vacillated as to just where they stood. But the problem-shift from mere adherence to doctrine, to that of community membership, was summed up by a remark made in 1914, and quoted in this book, to the effect that during the Emancipation period one was asked what one *believed*, whereas now one was asked who one *was*.

The old communities had *Gemeinschaft*, but thought of themselves in religious terms. The new wider and anonymous community tried to see itself as a *Gemeinschaft*, and Romanticism was the literary and philosophical means used to rusee that end. The old community had been able to use religion to close itself off; even if conversion theoretically made it open, social sanctions made conversion difficult. (Montesquieu commented on the theological oddity - and the social logic - of the medieval rule, which required confiscation of the goods of any Jew converting to Christianity.) In the new setting, religious belief became too lightweight to support social sanctions. So racial ideas (irrespective of the validity of the biology on which they were based) were the obvious candidates for a technique of closing the community, if that was desired - which it often was. It was Heine who foresaw that the antisemitism of the pagans would be worse than that of the Christians.

It is a considerable merit of Elisabeth Young-Bruhl's biography that in this problem base-line from which Hannah Arendt started is made very plain. The Arendt family's compromise with the spectrum of possible solutions was that they remained Jews, but ate pork, and the revelation which guided and dominated their lives was not the Torah, but Goethe and the idea of *Bildung*. Like many logically incoherent compromises, this might have worked well enough, and not probably did work tolerably well, but for one thing: the problem was ever self-renewing, it was fed with wave

after wave of new entrants. The railway line which linked Königsberg with Klessau, and the enormous human reservoir to the south-east, ensured that every decade there were many for whom this was the first generation of Emancipation and Enlightenment. There was of course a class between the middle-class Jews who had been through the *rite de passage* of the Enlightenment, and the working-class Ostjuden who had not.

So in a way time stood still. This is highlighted by the fact that the one relationship of Hannah Arendt's which comes over more clearly and convincingly than any other in this biography, is her attachment to Rahel Varnhagen. She herself described Rahel as "her greatest friend, though she has been dead for some one hundred years". Rahel Varnhagen had experienced the dilemma in its full intensity in the first generation in which it had presented itself, and had gone through the cycle of assimilationist aspiration (she attempted to marry a member of the Prussian nobility) to an eventual return to her Jewishness. Hannah somehow retraced Rahel's path: the difference was, I suppose, that for Rahel, Goethe was a contemporary solace, and for Hannah he was the very baseline of existence. Hannah was a better-looking Rahel, with the option of Zionism thrown in. A further difference was that the issue eventually could not enter to a salon, but to a gas-chamber.

If the relationship to the long-since dead Rahel is the most illuminating one in *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, there can be no doubt as to which other relationship has recently aroused the greatest interest. This, of course, is the young Hannah's affair with one of her teachers, the celebrated Martin Heidegger, star pupil of the Jew Husserl, and himself later involved with Nazism. The circle which had begun with Enlightenment in the days of Rahel, was now coming close to a full revolution. Hannah herself was to describe Heidegger as "the last romantic", and thus to be identified. Young-Bruhl writes, with those who have destroyed Rahel's cosmopolitan salon. "The leading Romantic of the age, who was to endorse a most ruthless implementation of that Romanticism, involved himself in a liaison with one of those whom German Romanticism had created an insoluble problem of identity, and for whom it was shortly to become literally lethal.

The presentation of this relationship, however, is very disappointing. Young-Bruhl treats it with hushed reverence, and after telling us the bare facts of the affair, bursts into her own translations of Hannah Arendt's poetry. Unfortunately she mistranslates a crucial passage on which her own interpretation hinges: "starre Hingebtheit in ein einziges" cannot really be translated as "unbending devotion to a single one", because *ein einziges* is neuter, and thus suggests a thing or an abstraction, and



Hannah Arendt and Mary McCarthy, a photograph from the book reviewed here.

cannot signify a person, a single one. The phrase evidently commends single-minded devotion to an abstraction, an activity or value, rather than to a beloved *person*. It could just about signify a relationship, but not an individual.

Young-Bruhl is not really at home in German. Elsewhere she mistranslates, "Angst vor dem Dasein ueberhaupt" (fear of Being in general) as "anxiety over existence in general"; and in another important passage (significant for an assessment of Arendt's character), she mis-translates "Schwindel" as "fib", when in fact it means "trickery, deception, cheating". She also describes Hannah's husband as having attended a *Volkskuehle*.

Abelard-and-Elisabeth relationships cannot be uncommon in the universities. Within the zone of their professional aura, middle-aged professors can hope for better sexual bargains than they could possibly secure by their own unaided charms on the open market. As for the student, she can expect closer attention in bed than in the seminar, and some of it is understood that the meeting of bodies is an expression of the communion and fertilization of minds. What however distinguished the Heidegger-Arendt liaison is that on this occasion the high esteem in which the participants held themselves and each other, and the intellectual significance they attributed to the relationship, was shared by many other people. Heidegger and Arendt, conscious of the *wellthorische* significance of their relationship, arranged for their mutual correspondence to be deposited in a literary archive in Germany.

It is not entirely clear whether Young-Bruhl has had access to these letters; if not, this would help to explain the curious lifelessness of her account of the affair. What does come to life is the fact that it was *Lotte in Weimar* episode after the war, when the ex-Nazi and his Jewish ex-mistress meet again. It was then that he confessed to Hannah that she had been the passion of his life and the inspiration of his work. Here Young-Bruhl is interesting, but a little disingenuous. The text fully asserts, in two quite distinct passages, that Heidegger admitted to Hannah that she had been his great passion and inspiration, and that Hannah noted that he was a notorious liar about everything, however that now at last he was telling the truth. How many readers, I wonder, will check the voluminous notes and find that the evidence cited for this comes from letters which Hannah Arendt herself wrote to a third party - not to Heidegger himself? How trustworthy is a woman's uncorroborated claim that a man told her that she was the passion and inspiration of his life? It may well be true that this was what he told her, but on this sort of point a biographer's duty is to make plain the unsymmetrical nature of the evidence, and to establish between an *ex parte* claim and an established fact.

The important truth is probably the other way round. As will emerge, the central oddity and incoherence of Arendt's work makes me suspect that this was so. What Martin Heidegger the man actually meant to her, is not for me to say. With respect to the original episode, this biography is coy and uninformative (it does not even investigate properly why Hannah left Marburg), and when describing the post-war reunion, it is, perhaps rightly, patronizing and condescending to Heidegger. It is all seen very much from Hannah's viewpoint. Ironically, as I have said, one reiterated piece of evidence about the young Hannah is a mis-translation. But what can hardly be doubted is Hannah's deep involvement with German Romanticism, and that is of central importance. Her characterization of Heidegger as "the last (we hope) romantic" is probably the most important piece of evidence about his role in her life. This remark, together with her identification with Rahel, suggests one conclusion. She loved him, not despite the leanings which eventually led him into the Nazi Party, but because of them. And to condemn Romanticism would have been to condemn him. This, it seems, she could not bring herself to do, and the oddity of her most famous work is congruent with this.

The separation of Arendt and Heidegger was of course ratified by the events of 1933. Heidegger in due course joined the Nazi Party, and Arendt went into exile in France. In Paris, just as in Germany earlier and in Manhattan later, she became close to one of the leading intellectuals of the day. (To be absent from the index of this volume is to be excluded from the mainstream of intellectual history, and is not a fate to be borne lightly.) She lived through the fall of France and through the treatment of the refugees as "scum of the earth" in Arthur Koestler's phrase; together with her husband she eventually succeeded in leaving Europe via Lisbon and in reaching America.

There she rapidly entered that legendary hothouse of mainly Jewish intellectuals on Manhattan, the famous "tribe", and achieved a prominent and respected position within it. (This part of the biography would make an excellent scenario for a Woody Allen film.) The wealth of personal and intellectual experience she had acquired on the way provided her with the material for commenting on the problems which emerged when the war against German Romanticism was won. She became very productive, and attained world fame.

New York, like Königsberg, is a port; but there the resemblance ends. America is, as it were, a post-Enlightenment society: it was born modern; liberalism is its tradition, not its radicalism or self-transformation; and this changes the rules of the game. America has no Goethe, and its intellectuals have no bitter-sweet love affair with the local culture, not a foreigner's *Gemeinschaft*, whether real or illusory. On the contrary, they live as close to the Eastern and Western seaboard as they can.

As a matter of fact, Hannah Arendt was very perceptive about the urban and idiosyncrasies of America. Nonetheless, her mechanical anti-Americanism, for instance, her total contempt for the American mind, her thought is almost uninfused by a European "worshippers of the machine" and that even American Marxism "theoretically, cannot believe the eyes" when they look at their own country. Since Americans have the Enlightenment as their birthright, something inherent in their historic society, taking it for granted with ambivalence, they need no Romantic philosophy of history as a corrective antidote. She also saw the merits of political liberalism, and thought that social liberalism, and thought that the former should be challenged while the latter should be sustained. She did not, like Tocqueville, seem to consider the possibility that the latter could be the condition of the former.

Without actually falling off into the Middle America, as they call it, America has its population, and the difference is that in America this movement of the people does not mean a sentiment of intellectuals on behalf of the people.

As a matter of fact, Hannah Arendt was very perceptive about the urban and idiosyncrasies of America. Nonetheless, her mechanical anti-Americanism, for instance, her total contempt for the American mind, her thought is almost uninfused by a European "worshippers of the machine" and that even American Marxism "theoretically, cannot believe the eyes" when they look at their own country. Since Americans have the Enlightenment as their birthright, something inherent in their historic society, taking it for granted with ambivalence, they need no Romantic philosophy of history as a corrective antidote. She also saw the merits of political liberalism, and thought that social liberalism, and thought that the former should be challenged while the latter should be sustained. She did not, like Tocqueville, seem to consider the possibility that the latter could be the condition of the former.

Apart from America, she should think about the new state of Israel. Here, her reactions were generous rather than profound. She missed some kind of federal scheme in Palestine which would have ensured that no one was in a minority anywhere; she took a naive pride in the Israeli military triumph of 1967 without evidently considering the possibility that it might be a political disaster. Jewishness is like awareness of death or sex: it is always present, there are no solutions for the problem; it engenders, and one can only live about it in aphorisms. But Hannah Arendt now talked in a confidential way, as if solutions existed. But is Romanticism also stayed with her, when she thought she saw a general social solution in the spontaneity of workers' councils in the 1956 Budapest rising.

But it wasn't her reflections on America or Israel which first brought her prominence, it was her attempt to come to terms with, to understand what had happened in Europe. Her background, her family and personal history, all her previous intellectual involvement, had prepared her for this task; she turned to it, and what she wrote was greatly acclaimed. Was it acclaim justified?

Later, ironically, when she was about the Eichmann trial, she came to be associated with her phrase, "banality of evil." The irony lies in the fact that her central idea, when it came to terms with the horror of the Holocaust, was precisely the opposite. The evil was not banal; it was totally alien, unpredictable, demonic, quite outside the range of what we could expect or comprehend. In a way, this mystical or dramatization is in itself very much of the Romantic tradition - even if here, ironically, it is used to exorcise Romanticism and philosophy. She having fathered the allegedly alienated Arendt used the language and ideas drawn from the witches' brew of Weimar intellectual life - ideas and notions similar to those which would be popularized by Marx's denunciation of liberal individualism.

There was of course no contradiction between this and her characterization of Eichmann. On the contrary, it was in first accounted for totalitarianism, the Kafkaesque and Wagnerian, the ordinary of Eichmann was found to strike and puzzle her. World is to have made more sense if he had looked and acted as if he were straight out of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Young-Bruhl quotes a 1957 statement of Arendt's which sums up her attitude:

All elements (other than Bolshevism) which crystallized into the totalitarian movement of movements can be traced to subterranean currents in Western history which emerged only now and where the traditional social and political framework of Europe was being dismantled. The shocking originality of totalitarianism, the fact that its ideologies, and its methods of government, were totally unprecedented and that they defied proper explanation in the forms of

overlooked if one lays too much stress on the only element which has behind it a respectable tradition... Marxism.

What on earth was she up to? If Marxism is the only reputable element in the witches' brew of totalitarian ideas, if all the others had emerged from some unspeakable underworld with "shocking originality", then all those themes previously present in the intellectual mainstream are given a clean bill of health. This, it seems, was what she wanted to achieve. While she was, with affectionate condescension and some belief that her ex-lover's ideas had led her to Nazism and to personal megalomania, when confronted by the same ideas in the abstract, she wanted to exonerate the lot!

Arendt's contribution to our understanding of what it was that had happened to Europe in the 1930s and 1940s seems to me to have been grossly overrated. Her far too colourful canvas may well have brought to our attention the all-too-genuine horrors, but at the same time it made them seem unreal, operatic, metaphysical, and above all, comfortably alien, not really after all very much connected with us. And there she was wrong; and given her background, her life-long preoccupation, her error is strange. So well equipped to understand the evil which had nearly engulfed her, and which had engulfed so many whom she had known when it came to comprehending it, she failed.

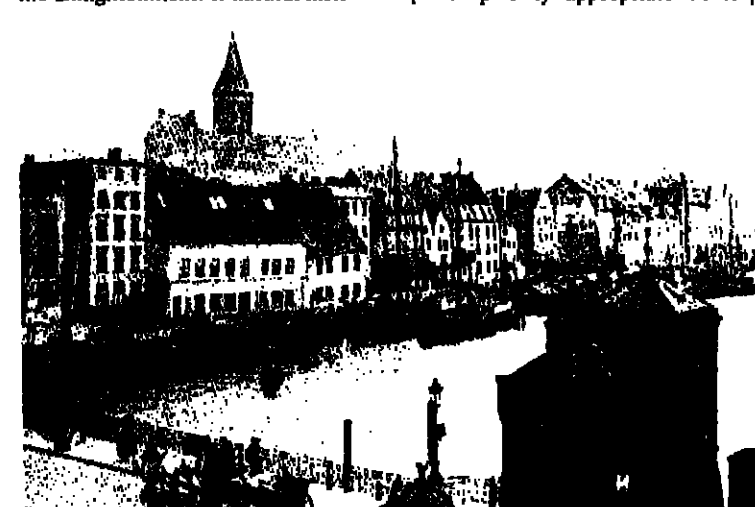
I do not claim that Nazism has mainly or primarily intellectual causes. But contrary to what Arendt tried to argue, it was continuous with, not all, but many perfectly recognizable, overt themes and attitudes in European thought. In a number of senses, Hitler was Europe's destiny. Militarily he was only stopped by an off-shore island, a half-Asian tyranny almost as bad as his own (though much less efficient), and by a trans-Atlantic power. Very large sections of Europe's middle and working class were quite prepared to accommodate themselves to the New Order whose ideological cover - and this is what is most relevant to Arendt's argument - was in fact perfectly compatible with any rate one significant strand in the European intellectual tradition. Marxism, contrary to what she averred, was not the only element in totalitarianism with a reputable intellectual ancestry; and demonstrably she knew this, even though she denied it.

Let us return to the story of Romanticism, which Arendt blamed for the destruction of Rahel Varnhagen's cosmopolitan salon. It began as the revaluation of idiosyncratic folk cultures as opposed to universalist, cosmopolitan Reason. But by the nineteenth century, culture, in its light with barren reason, found a powerful ally - Nature. The ally was all the more significant in that it could be used to reason: reason had taught, in Enlightenment form, that man was part of nature, should reserve nature, and not seek exemption from it. Unfortunately, in the nineteenth century Darwin had also popularized the fact that nature had a lot of nasty habits, notably ruthlessness and a willingness to eliminate the unfit, and was very wasteful with life in the pursuit of excellence. So reason legitimated nature, and nature in turn legitimated reason. Thus reason had dug its own grave.

It also became widely recognized that if we are parts of nature, then we are animals, and if we are animals, then we obtain our true, our deepest, our most life-enhancing, fulfilling satisfactions, not from abstract aims or more earthy, brutal and exclusive ways. This can be described as the call of the Dark Gods, Blood and Earth, etc. Now Romanticism had already been susceptible to earlier and pre-Darwinian versions of such ideas, ever since the *Sturm und Drang*. It had always been rather keen on *das Dämonische*, which excites in a way that reason cannot. As Arendt noted in connection with her ex-lover, this element led talented individuals within the tradition to take themselves far too seriously. So when nature red in tooth and claw came to reinforce culture, the tradition of Romantic claims for culture against reason was well prepared to incorporate this new ally.

The problem of the Enlightenment had been why the self-evident truths of reason so little respected, so

difficult to implement? Hegel and Marxism had one answer: history has its dance of the seven veils and will only reveal the naked truth after passing through a sequence of social forms and beliefs, each with its temporary illusions. Romanticism proper had another answer: cultural togetherness and natural instincts ensure that our true satisfactions cannot be obtained through the false and abstract ideals of the Enlightenment. If natural instincts



Königsberg, East Prussia, at the turn of the century; a photograph from the book under review, referred to on p. 843.

include the call of the king-group, and historic collectivities are based on kinship, as was often held to be the case, then the two criticisms converge.

When nature and its corollaries - competition and natural selection - came to be invoked against conscious reason in the name of excellence, health and of true human satisfaction and its honest recognition, this could be done in two ways, either individually or collectively. The individualistic way, which is shorn of the more colourful Romantic elements, is what may be called the Austro-Chicago way (with side-glances towards Glasgow and Manchester). Nature had progressed by competition in the jungle, and can do so again in the market-place (though it then, rather awkwardly, also needs a peace-keeping body, with an extra-natural status). The problem is only the old *Gemeinschaft*, that set of habits of excessive cooperativeness, which we picked up in the tribal-band period of human history. This vision does not yearn for the *Gemeinschaft*, it wants to get rid of it, and quickly, for it is the root of totalitarianism. Neither F. A. Hayek nor Karl Popper occur in Young-Bruhl's very extensive index.

Nor does J. L. Talmon, who worked out a far more precise theory of the origins of totalitarianism in terms of its intellectual antecedents. This suggests that neither Hannah Arendt nor her biographer are seriously interested in advancing the question of the origins of totalitarianism and in considering rival views. Here I cannot resist a little vulgar-Marxist sociology of knowledge. Could this Viennese theory of the origins of totalitarianism have its source in the reaction of the liberal, individualist Viennese bourgeoisie to the terrible spectacle of hordes of mutually supportive cousins descending on Vienna from the *shiel*, not to mention *zadruga*-loads of Balkan peasants?

But in Königsberg, Marburg, and similar places, the Viennese reaction was not the dominant one. There, the congenial naturalistic reaction prevailed. Nature's imperatives of ruthlessness, excellence, and institutional fulfillment, were superimposed on the Romantic stress on cultural *communities*, a line of thought which had been present ever since the first reaction to the Enlightenment. Some people romanticize their real or supposed ancestral community, and at the same time oppose ethnic prejudice and wish to be fair to everyone. But you can't really have it both ways. The cosy old community was ethnocentric, and it was wish to love and perpetuate it as it truly was, prejudice against outsiders, truly was, the package-deal! The trouble about the Nazis was that they were only too consistent on this point. The Enlightenment had been open to anyone willing to endorse its ideas. Romanticism could hardly avoid being closed; who wants to be a member of a *Gemeinschaft* which lets in anyone, let alone people like himself? But a society would not be closed by means of adherence to doctrine, for this no longer carried any weight. So genetics

could do the job instead. *Cuius regio, eius genes*.

The resulting mix of community-Romanticism and naturalism, though perhaps never formally codified, was precisely the ideology of Nazism. If Hitler had won, there would without doubt have been a major philosophical industry on the Continent, explaining why the victory was a culmination, a completion of a necessary and philosophically appropriate develop-

ment. We may also assume that Heidegger would not have confessed that Hannah Arendt had been his great passion and inspiration, and the aptly named Elfriede Heidegger's feelings would have been spared.

Hannah Arendt must have been incomparably more familiar with the details of this part of intellectual history than I am. This being so, why did she go out of her way to try and exonerate European thought in the way that she did? While privately castigating her ex-lover for his tendency to personal megalomania and its roots in his intellectual tradition, was she still nevertheless eager to exculpate his ideas and the tradition itself? But we shan't come to terms

with what happened if we pretend it was totally alien to us.

She would have stressed the central difference between Nazism and Bolshevism, the difference between the ideology of Nature and the ideology of History.

Nature has been as important a bolt-hole from reason as history in the European philosophy of the past two centuries, so why did Arendt pretend that it all had nothing to do with European thought, that it had crawled out from beneath the stones?

Having declined to account for the horror in terms of its intellectual antecedents, she had to do it sociologically; and for this she was, in various ways, ill equipped. Her theory seems to be that subterranean forces were somehow released by the breakdown of European order, by atomization, by the masses, and by a system which can dispense with men. What it all means is not clear, and she quite neglects the fact that Hitler's New Order was indeed an Order, which as long as it was victorious was acceptable to many, without the sanction of terror, and which could be justified in terms of themes that had long been present - albeit implemented with a consistency and thoroughness which was tragic for those who, previously half-included in it, were now wholly excluded.

The verbosity, untidy logic, impressionism and imprecision of Arendt's style make her contribution of dubious value. Not for her the attempt to reconstruct, as accurately as possible, the actual constraints operating in a given social situation. The phenomenological method of her intellectual mentors, Husserl and Heidegger, of course encouraged her to adopt this style. Here is another link between her and the Enlightenment and the first reaction to it.

The Enlightenment, apart from its rationalism and cosmopolitanism, had

also devalued the ordinary world we live in (quite apart from whether it is linked to a real community). The "lived world" was doomed to become a kind of limbo between the empirical data-base on the one hand, and the realm of abstract, explanatory concepts on the other. It loses all standing, becoming a kind of habituation-of-convenience, but without any genuine cognitive significance. The phenomenological movement in philosophy, led by Husserl, gave it a name (*Lebenswelt*), and restored dignity to it, by making its study, once "bracketed" (ie disconnected from the explanatory concepts and questions of validity, evidence and origin), into the main business of philosophy. Phenomenology tends to be a rather dull business of describing our own daily concepts, and only acquires excitement when it turns to the very personal part of the *Lebenswelt*, to the human condition, to the way in which we are "thrown into the world" etc, which is where Heidegger came in.

Now the phenomenological method makes some sense when applied to established concepts which had long helped to organize our world, and which presumably have a well-defined use. A phenomenological exploration in such a case can presumably lead to a kind of enhancement of our conceptual self-knowledge. But what sense does it make when applied to a new phenomenon and a new idea such as totalitarianism? It then has a kind of inherent and inescapable arbitrariness: whatever you put into the bag, you can also pull out.

Hannah Arendt had lived through it all, and hers was an interesting and symptomatic life. In *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* it is well and readably recorded. But when dusk came, the owl of Minerva failed to take flight. "Loyalty is the sign of Truth", proclaims one of Young-Bruhl's chapter headings (questionably. (At least there is no such motto of the SS); but Hannah Arendt seemed, in the end, more loyal to her lover than to truth.

The memoirs are most useful as a document of the psychological and intellectual motives of pre-Communist élites in Romania. Duca, who was baffled and appalled by the Russian revolution, still thought of himself as a radical. He had been influenced by Waldeck-Rousseau while he was studying law in Paris and had written a thesis on the statutes of rural co-operatives. His occasional (and untidy) harsh words are reserved for some of his conservative adversaries (Carp, Măiorescu, Filipescu) and for King Carol I, whose stern Victorianism may well have reminded him of his own father, an able administrator of the country's railway system. Duca himself was, by all accounts, both emotional and sentimental; his concern over social conditions in the countryside was induced in part by a lingering nostalgia for a simple pastoral humanity. A man of scrupulous rectitude himself, he seems inclined (in the memoirs) to overlook or excuse the rapacity, selfishness and irresponsibility frequent enough among the political class of his time. Duca was able to admire equally socialists like Vivian and Jaures and conservatives like Balfour and Apponyi on the ground of their proficiency as orators.

Duca's urbanity, like his innocent curiosity and sense of humour, reveal the soul of a connoisseur, not of a party politician. The reverse side of these qualities is a kind of dreaminess, or even weakness; that made him more effective under strong political personalities such as Ionel Brătianu and which, in a sadly symbolic way, doomed him to a sacrificial role. Like the best of his generation he preferred to think that his admiring trust in the Western powers was rewarded, and never dared plumb the depths of their indifference towards Eastern Europe. His gentlemanly and aesthetic outlook did not equip him to hold his own in a world of competing totalitarian ideologies. His death was a decisive blow against the survival of a political party in Romania.

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Julian Symons

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In 1945 the first issue of a short-lived, book-sized magazine called *Focus* made its main theme a symposium on Kafka and Rex Warner. It would be safe to say that few people now would suggest such a comparison, not only because Warner's sensibility was obviously inferior to Kafka's, but because it was used for wholly different ends. *The Wild Goose Chase*, *The Professor* and *The Aerodrome* were books that took shape and meaning from what was happening in the world immediately before and during the Second World War. They suggested the need for changing society, where Kafka was concerned with the individual's problems, which would exist under any regime. Warner had been influenced by Kafka, but only in the sense of turning the Kafka apparatus of ambiguity, confusion and mystery to his own socio-political purposes. There was no other similarity between the two writers, and if one were looking for the chief influence on Rex Warner's attitude and approach in these books, it would not be Kafka but John Bunyan.

The books were made more distinctly individual by the fact that Kafka ambiguity and the strongly moral flavour derived from Bunyan were serviced by a style whose weight and dignity were based on eighteenth-century models. "Now by a most strange coincidence, so strange that in it I have often seemed to detect the hand of Providence, my wife was turning that very evening from a six months' stay abroad, whither she had been forced to go for the treatment of a serious illness. It is the Rector in *The Aerodrome* speaking, but such passages abound in all three books. This clever piece of period pastiche is itself deliberately mocked a couple of chapters later, when the Flight-Lieutenant announces the Rector's death to the hero by saying: "Something rather rotten has happened. I'm afraid I've potted your old man." The Flight-Lieutenant continues to use clichés in describing the Rector's death from a machine-gun accidentally loaded with live ammunition: "The old boy... went over like a ninepin. It was a really bad show."

Warner's three books were part of a movement away from realism to fiction that included also Edward Upward's semi-surrealist short stories, Ruthven Todd's *Over The Mountain* and his later, almost stillborn novel *Loser's Choice*. The assumption behind them was that a social fable could be told more successfully if realistic characterization was replaced by a kind of farcical tragedy in which the villains were comic, destructive puppets. The hypocrisies of religion are being attacked when the Reverend Hamlet in *The Wild Goose Chase* is shown carrying a cylinder of poison gas under his cassock and Todd's Father Podmore is shown as a propagandist for a Fascist government. In Warner the policemen have idiotic grins and carry straw truncheons. In Todd the plain-clothes men are all mentally deficient children who have been trained to obey orders and regard the violence they inflict on others as a game. They... loved the noise of their revolvers firing and the sight of their victims being blown over backward by the force of the large calibre bullets." When one of the morose kills a man against instructions he is deprived of him at tea-time, and his Saturday penny is suspended for a month. Warner and Todd were both writing before the war, and meant only to attack such broad targets as the police, the church, and the authoritarian state, but their parodic treatment, which shows cruelty as unthinking and automatic rather than cruel, is in some ways more effective as a realistic rendering of such

themes. The limitations of the approach, however, were soon apparent to all its practitioners, or perhaps it should be said that they lacked the continuous flow of invention necessary to criticize society through comic or satiric symbolism. Within a few years Warner turned to straightforward historical fiction, upward to the lugubriously humdrum account of a Communist intellectual's long trudge away from dogma in *The Spiral Ascent*, and Todd gave up writing novels.

The Aerodrome, which first appeared in 1941, is generally regarded as the best of the books making this allegorical or symbolic approach to social problems, although it lacks the verve of *The Wild Goose Chase*. Warner is still able to say in an introductory note that "I do not even aim at realism", and to observe perhaps unnecessarily that although the aerodrome of his title and the village to which it is compared are both repulsive, he has "the utmost affection and respect" for Britain's actual Air Force and villages, but the book's narrative tone is sombre and menacing. Where *The Wild Goose Chase* strayed off in all directions, *The Aerodrome* is a well-shaped and finely ordered story. *The Professor*, which came between the two, was too obviously a sermon on the failure of liberalism. The book now reissued is, as Anthony Burgess says in his introduction, subtle, ambiguous and restrained. His comparison of it with *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, however, can only be damaging to *The Aerodrome*. Orwell's book was a vision of a terrible future, worked out in exact and tragic detail. Warner's is a piece of symbolism that in the end evades the problems it poses.

The opposition between village and aerodrome is immediately, and effectively, set up. The village has its manor house where the Squire lives, its Rectory, its pub - and the grey stone cottages that house the villagers. A mile away is the aerodrome, which is said to be of vital importance to the country's defences. The village is poor, the inmates of the aerodrome evidently rich, the villagers' ways are haphazard and slovenly, those of the airmen orderly and neat. As the story develops the aerodrome encroaches on the village, taking over the manor house, employing the villagers and exercising control over their lives. Interpretation of the symbolism is admirably flexible. The village stands for "life" in some unregenerate and possibly even decaying form, the aerodrome represents what can be achieved by efficient machines, or by people behaving like machines. Within this general outline Warner offers a wide range of minor meanings and

possibilities, although in the end he comes down on the side of untidy life against the perfect order of machinery. The beginning of the book finds Roy, the hero and narrator, with his face pressed drunkenly in the mud (in the closest possible touch with the earth), and the end sees the death of the aerodrome's Air Vice-Marshal through the sabotage of a piece of machinery, his plane.

Within this satisfying framework a story is worked out that often seems at cross-purposes with the theme. Roy learns almost at the start that the Rector whom he regarded as a parent is not his father, and in the following chapter hears the Rector confess to murder. (The murder is committed on a mountain - the arduous, frustrations and implicit "proving" nature of mountain climbing held a particular fascination for Thirties intellectuals, as shown in *The Ascent of F.6*, of Kenneth Allott's lines: "One climbs mountains in a storm of fear. (Begg is untapped and left alone)." The story develops with several glancing, perhaps ironical allusions to classical myth. Roy is carrying on an affair with the pub landlord's daughter, learns with horror

that he has been committing incest, and then that this is untrue. It is an even greater shock to be told that the Air Vice-Marshal is his father. There are other family entanglements, reminiscent again of an eighteenth-century novel, and most of the later chapters contain some kind of shock or ingenious surprise.

Such cross-hatching certainly carries the narrative forward, but does it have much purpose beyond mystification? If so, Warner is not helpful in elucidating it, but in any case this clatter of family skeletons seems irrelevant to the struggle between village and aerodrome. There are brilliant passages that do advance the main theme: the Air Vice-Marshal's speech in church after the Rector's death, in which he stresses the unimportance of individual lives; the Flight-Lieutenant's division between sex and love; the cutting of all family links insisted on by the Air Vice-Marshal ("we hope to help you to free yourselves from the bondage of the past"), and his own order that no airman may father a child. Yet in the end these take second place to Roy's personal problems. The book's

conflicts should be between the human and the mechanical; instead we are given an account of family descent, betrayals that answers none of our questions. The social problem of village versus aerodrome, one kind of society against another, cannot be dealt with satisfactorily in personal terms, and it solves nothing, after the Air Vice-Marshal has been killed, for Roy to tell us that "the new order, resting as it did on the desperate will of one man, had been broken and the old order could never be restored".

Was the new order, as some suggested at the time, that of the Fascist state, or did Warner have his theoretical perfection of Communism lingering in his mind? Such questions fade away under the author's determination to deal with the Oedipal problems of parents and children. *The Aerodrome* looks, at this time of day, much more than when it was written, like a good idea gone wrong, an emphatically accented phrase: "He doesn't know Greek." Those familiar with his standards will take what appears to be a contemptuous dismissal at its true value: Lloyd-Jones means simply that the person in question does not have sufficient grasp of the ancient language to be able to produce, for example, at short notice and with metrical and linguistic accuracy, a Greek version, preferably in a difficult form, of an English poem.

By that standard many of us, including the present writer, "do not know Greek", but Lloyd-Jones does. He is one of the last products of a virtuous linguistic discipline which never took him root outside England and is now no longer seriously cultivated even there. Up to the time of his appointment as Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford he was known to the scholarly world as a textual critic of skill, subtlety and admirable restraint, and also as an interpreter of Greek poetry, especially of tragedy, with what was at that time an unfashionable emphasis on traditional motifs - the workings of a hereditary curse, the retrospective justice of Zeus. With his assumption of the professorship in 1960 he assumed the additional burden of serving as Louis MacNeice once put it, "as impresario of the ancient Greeks" to the general education of public, and these two books, their contents all dating from 1960 onwards, are the fruit of that activity.

Lloyd-Jones is, of course, following in the footsteps of most of his modern predecessors, who have all, except perhaps for Ingram Bywater, been public figures as well as scholars in their own right - Dodds, Murray and

The impresario at work

Bernard Knox

HUGH LLOYD-JONES
Blood for the Ghosts: Classical Influences in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
312pp, Duckworth, £24.
0 7156 1500 9

Classical Survivals: The Classics in the Modern World
184pp, Duckworth, £18.
0 7156 1517 3

"We know that ghosts cannot speak until they have drunk blood; and the spirits which we evoke demand the blood of our hearts. We give it to them gladly; but if they then abide our question, something from us has entered into them; something alien, that must be cast out in the name of truth." This remark, the epigraph of Hugh Lloyd-Jones's book on classical influences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is a quotation from a speech made by Wilamowitz-Moellendorf at Oxford in 1908. He was explaining, in the final paragraphs of an address on Greek historical writing, the problem faced by the scholar who, like himself (and like Gilbert Murray, the translator of his speech), is torn between mastery of detail and "scientific" historicism on the one hand - "Carlyle's Dryasdust" - and the fervent wish to "make Greece intelligible not only to scholars but to the general reader", as Lloyd-Jones puts it in his essay on Murray, and to do so without "importing Christianity or other modern preconceptions into antiquity". This scholarly predicament is a main theme of the two books; understood and explored in the author's inaugural lecture as Regius Professor at Oxford (the first chapter of *Blood for the Ghosts*), it is a ribbon of continuity running through the rich and varied parade of reviews and essays which deal with scholars, thinkers and poets as distant as Goethe and as recent as the late Sir Denys Page.

The author's distinction on one side of the antithesis has long since been recognized: he is an acknowledged master of the complicated linguistic phenomenon known as ancient Greek - a literary language which evolved in dialect and idiomatic variety over the course of more than a thousand years. When he says of Page that "he had strong opinions one way or the other, and did not see eye to eye with everybody", he might well be describing himself; he is apt to criticize the work of fellow scholars with the emphatically accented phrase: "He doesn't know Greek." Those familiar with his standards will take what appears to be a contemptuous dismissal at its true value: Lloyd-Jones means simply that the person in question does not have sufficient grasp of the ancient language to be able to produce, for example, at short notice and with metrical and linguistic accuracy, a Greek version, preferably in a difficult form, of an English poem.

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of course, Jowett all reached out to a public beyond the seminar and schoolroom. Not that Lloyd-Jones would welcome the comparison with Jowett, who to really didn't know Greek; Bywater himself, a thoroughly reliable Jones sees this stable Greek attitude as steering a middle course... between the extremes of Manichaeism... belief in the wickedness of the world and the fatuous self-complacency of Rousseauite utopian optimism... The gods were not merciful... the gods were just; but their justice did not hold out to mankind the sort of comfort Christianity would later offer... In the essay on Murray he criticizes him for not seeing the "merits" of such a view of divinity; one cannot help suspecting that it is close to his own. In any case it fits perfectly with his views of men and society: "I am a Conservative," he says, "with very little belief in the intrinsic goodness of human nature." Such views and the outspokenness with which they are expressed ("the Greeks were not tolerant of the well-meaning idiot", he says, and neither is he), has made him a controversial figure. But that is no new role for a Regius Professor of Greek.

When Henry VIII founded the professorship at Oxford in 1546 (Cambridge had received one in 1540) the subject itself was a controversial one. Not many years before, in 1518, student hecklers, calling themselves "Trojans", demonstrated against the teaching of Greek and had to be silenced by a royal letter. They felt, quite correctly, that Greek was the death-warrant for the old scholastic education; it was also, because of the access it gave to the New Testament in the original tongue, a favoured study of the Reformers and an object of suspicion to Rome. Under the Marian reaction, Cheke, the Regius Professor at Cambridge, was compelled to recant at Protestant beliefs and at Oxford Greek studies are said to have disappeared. In modern times even Jowett, that ideal Victorian, was prosecuted (unsuccessfully) for heresy; Murray was an opponent of the South African War and after the First World War became chairman of the League of Nations Union; Dodds, who was proud of his Irish nationality, was, as an undergraduate at Oxford, "strongly advised not to stay up" when he expressed the feelings he later described in his autobiography, *Mixing Persons*: "It was impossible to withhold one's sympathy from the heroic dreamers in the Dublin Post Office." And Lloyd-Jones is a conservative non-conformist in a liberal age.

It is all the more remarkable that three subjects which are apt to raise the hackles of the modern conservative - the position of women in society, Gladstone and Karl Marx - are handled with sympathetic understanding. Lloyd-Jones's reviews of two books on women in antiquity (both American - in fact he found one of them in a bookstore in Cambridge, Mass, where the classics offerings were wedged in between "Women's Studies", "Black Studies" and "Gay Studies") are level-headed appreciations of work in an area where the paucity of evidence tends to generate more heat than light. The long essay on Gindstone has the merit of rescuing from oblivion some of the Prime Minister's eminently sound ideas about the Homeric poems which had been consigned to oblivion together with his crazy attempts to equate Homeric and Christian theology. Incidentally, those who have only read Ludwig's life of Schliemann in translation will be delighted to learn that in the original edition in German, Schliemann, disgusted by Gladstone's failure to save Gordon at Khartoum, thought of destroying the signed photograph he had been given but decided against it and "compromised by leading his family in procession to consign it to the lavatory". The essay on Karl Marx stresses the thoroughness of his early training as a Greek scholar and will give Marxists food for thought by its demonstration that the doctorate thesis of 1841 (on Democritus and Epicurus) "proves him to have been steeped in the aesthetics of the age of Winckelmann and Goethe" and its claim that "Marxian aesthetics developed out of this, and not be fully understood except with reference to it".

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Greek attitude from Homer to Thucydides, as Lloyd-Jones does in his *Justice of Zeus*, see a process of moral and intellectual development - the classic statement of this view is Bruno Snell's *Entdeckung des Geistes*. Lloyd-Jones sees this stable Greek attitude as steering a middle course... between the extremes of Manichaeism... belief in the wickedness of the world and the fatuous self-complacency of Rousseauite utopian optimism... The gods were not merciful... the gods were just; but their justice did not hold out to mankind the sort of comfort Christianity would later offer... In the essay on Murray he criticizes him for not seeing the "merits" of such a view of divinity; one cannot help suspecting that it is close to his own. In any case it fits perfectly with his views of men and society: "I am a Conservative," he says, "with very little belief in the intrinsic goodness of human nature." Such views and the outspokenness with which they are expressed ("the Greeks were not tolerant of the well-meaning idiot", he says, and neither is he), has made him a controversial figure. But that is no new role for a Regius Professor of Greek.

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John Hornblower has an impressive knowledge of both the history and the culture of the early Hellenistic period, and her approach to her subject is clearly influenced by the work of Sir Ronald Syme. Her discussion of Hieronymus's truthfulness concludes by comparing his position at the court of Gonatas with that of Tacitus in the reigns of Nerva and Trajan, and the book itself ends with "men and dynasties pass; style abides", the same quotation from Syme which gave Angus Millar both the title and the conclusion of his review of Syme's *Roman Papers* in the latest *Journal of Roman Studies*. The same influence might be detected in the attention she gives to the language of Diodorus. She shows in an appendix that the style of Diodorus is uniform throughout his work, and that we cannot therefore hope to extract from him the words of Hieronymus himself. But when individual words or phrases occur only, or with unusual frequency, in Books 18-20 of Diodorus, we may conclude that we have a genuine echo of the phraseology of Hieronymus. Such is the case of Diodorus' use of *ta hola* in reference to the struggles of the Successors for overall control of Alexander's Empire, of *oregasthai* in reference to efforts to gain that control, of *idiopraghai* and *idiopragma* meaning "to make oneself independent of the central power", of *plutis* of Eumenes' professed loyalty to the Argead house, of *hyperphanos* and *trachys* of the character of Antigonus Monophthalmus.

It will not be easy to fault Mrs Hornblower's main conclusions. The book, though, is far from easy to read. The style is allusive (and with a disturbing number of hanging participles), the argument often obscure. Those who have not already wrestled with Diodorus' chronology in the fifth century will not make much of "a *kata gonata*" (p. 30); at p. 50 there is a sudden reference to "this Alexandrian snipe"; on p. 98 we are confronted with the weird "arrangements of historical lollipops"; and on p. 190 with an almost unintelligible discussion of the *argyraspides*.

When Mrs Hornblower moves outside her specific subject, she is least by G. M. Lewis in *La Parola del Passato*, 1974, are not a "library list... on fragments of papyrus" (p. 17, n. 57); it is strange to be told that it was part of "pagan civility" for a historian to discuss his sources and methods of composition (p. 26); and naively accept (p. 141) W. G. Forrest's (perhaps not

totally serious) claim that the families of the Manlii, Fulvii, Postumii, Valerii and Sulpicii were leaders of a "Greek lobby in the senate" from the middle of the fifth century onwards. And her discussion of early Roman contacts with Greece (pp. 248-50) omits mention of Cicero's reference to a Roman embassy to Alexander (though she earlier refers to Arius's version of the story), to the problem of Rome's relations with Rhodes, and to the evidence for Italians at Delos in the third century.

In her preface Mrs Hornblower indicates that her husband helped to keep her up to date with bibliography at a time when it was difficult for her to visit libraries herself. There are, indeed, references to works published in 1980 and 1981 but among earlier works I miss references to R. A. Lock on the *argyraspides* (*Historia*, 1977) and to N. K. Petroscheilos, *Roman Attitudes to the Greeks*, and Dacre Baldson, *Romans and Aliens*, concerning the views that Greeks and Romans took of each other. The full text of the Chian decree referred to on p. 249 was published (in a local Chian journal) in 1975 and can now be consulted in L. Moretti's article in *Rivista di filologia*, 1980 (a new text and discussion by P. S. Derow and W. G. Forrest is awaited). And while I would myself agree with Mrs Hornblower's rejection of the view that the story of Rome's Trojan origin is no earlier than the third century, reference should be made to recent articles by T. J. Cornell in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 1975, and by N. M. Horsfall in *Classical Quarterly* and *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1979.

I must also report that there are a far larger number of misprints than one would expect in a book published by the OUP.

Just published in the series Yale Classical Studies, edited for the Department of Classics by John J. Winkler and Gordon Williams, is *Volume XXVII: Later Greek Literature* (344pp, Cambridge University Press, £27.50, 0 521 23947 8), which contains nine essays on undeservedly neglected post-Hellenic authors and some of the new forms of literature of the period. Among them B. P. Reardon writes on Chion's *Chionas* and Callinikos and Professor Winkler himself on another novel, *Heliados*, *Aithiops*, Graham Anderson on *hophistic*, lecturing as exemplified by Lucian; and W. Geoffrey Arnott on the love-letters of "Aristonotus".

Mrs Hornblower is Head of Classics at Wycombe Abbey School and her book was published just two weeks before her husband Simon's *Mausolus* (reviewed in the TLS on April 23); it cannot have happened that the Oxford University Press has published two simultaneously books by husband and wife in the same field.

The phrase "religious and ethical attitude held generally in Greece down to the fifth century" is deliberately provocative; most scholars, far from emphasizing the continuity of the

In the feminine maze

Roger Cardinal

PHILIPPE SOUPAULT

Last Nights of Paris
Translated by William Carlos Williams
230pp, New York: Full Court Press, \$17.95.
0 916190 18 8

Les Dernières Nuits de Paris first appeared in 1928, a contribution to that distinctive French sub-genre in which the modern city is mythologized as a fantastic maze: Paris seen as enigma or dreamland. Taking its natural place alongside surrealist classics such as *Le Paysan de Paris* (1925) and *Nadja* (1928) - though it is clearly a less earnest work than those programmatic texts - Philippe Soupault's book manages to contain echoes of Resisti de la Bretonne and the Baudelaire of "Crépuscule du matin" and "Les Fousles", of Apollinaire and Léon-Paul Fargue, and of the *Fantomas* thrillers; it also has affinities with the Paris-based fantasies of such writers as Céline and Queneau, even in this version by an American hand (Henry Miller).

For all this protean air, Soupault's

book is relatively lightweight, a flimsy novelette improvised at speed and lacking any plausibility or real tension. Curiously, though, the events that take place do catch at the mind, sometimes exhibiting the quirky consistency of dreams. Soupault's hand intervenes to pattern the drift of trivial incidents and so demonstrate that arbitrary circumstances can partake of Destiny or Necessity, once the true aspect of Chance is disclosed. "I was willing to believe that chance was universal but in Paris, more than elsewhere, I seemed to see it more easily, almost to touch it with the finger."

The presences which flit through Soupault's text are little more than poetic conceits, though they do not lack charm. Among them we encounter the mysterious Georgette, who follows an interminable nightly beat from the Louvre to the Palais-Royal to the Champs-Élysées, her nocturnal passing lending the streets an erotic glow and transforming the night into a realm of surprise and hidden poetry. It is her tranquil aloofness which acts as a catalyst for the unexpected happenings of which the narrator is the bemused witness.

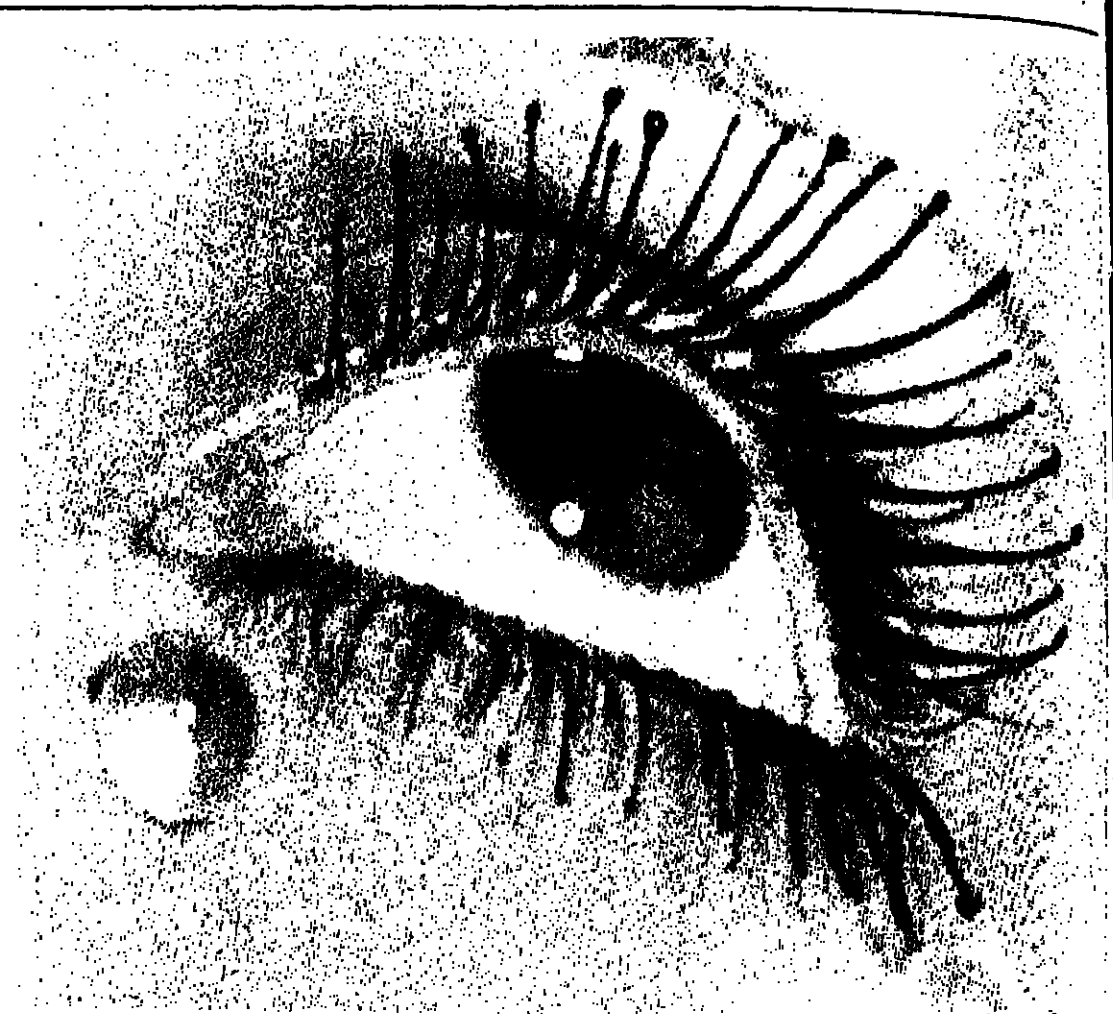
Georgette is associated with a circle of small-time criminals led by the

powerful Volpe, a cunning manipulator of other people's fears and longings yet, like everyone else in the book, an addict of the strange and the fantastic. Never quite under his sway is Georgette's retarded brother Octave, a solitary devoted to such single-minded experiments as counting the number of hairs on a paintbrush or trying to set the entire city alight. Brutal criminality is personified by a nameless sailor with a white sack who murders a man and cuts up the corpse yet still manages to roam the streets scot-free, confident of his ability to give the police the slip by remaining "a moving target".

The true heroine of the book is Paris herself - for Soupault's metropolis is emphatically feminine. Soupault creates a fascinating interplay between the erotic and the oniric, meshing these with the theme of criminal adventure, and lacing his narrative with references to odd fluctuations in the weather which exacerbate desire and curiosity. A recurrent motif is the act of stealthily tailing someone through the streets: the narrator is the typical "Paris Peasant" of *Flaubert* with a voyeuristic taste for all that is intriguing, aberrant, perverse.

Soupault's idiom is highly figurative,

"Lannes", c. 1930, by Man Ray. "Tears. A dancer's make-up brought forth these (glass) tears that do not express any kind of emotion." The photograph is reproduced in Man Ray Photographs (255pp with 347 duotone plates. Introduction by Jean-Hubert Martin, and three texts by Man Ray. Thames and Hudson. £18. 0 500 54079 9).



John J. Winkler

towards an independent Pakistan, by forming a coalition government of Congress and the Muslim League on a parity basis. Wavell called the Conference in June-July 1945. Churchill disliked Wavell's plan as he feared that it might lead India to self-government; none the less, he endorsed it, believing that it was bound to fail. To the delight of Churchill and three other members of his Cabinet (Simon, Grigg and Butler) the Conference did fail. It failed because Wavell was prevented by the Cabinet from alienating Jinnah. In addition to demanding for the Muslim League the same number of seats allowed to Congress in the proposed provisional government (a demand which had been conceded though Muslims formed less than one-third of India's population), Jinnah also insisted that no party other than the Muslim League should have the right to nominate Muslims. Wavell was advised by most of his Governors to go ahead with the formation of the provisional government without the Muslim League, and he would have done so but for the restraint imposed by Churchill. The documents in *The Transfer of Power* support the view that if Wavell had been given a free hand in his dealings with Jinnah, the Muslim League would have been persuaded to join the coalition government, and possibly the course of history might have been changed.

Yet, the Simla Conference was not a total failure. Like the Cripps Mission earlier, the Wavell Plan introduced a new concept too casually into the historical process: the concept of parity between caste Hindus and Muslims, which at once raised the status of Muslims from that of a minority to a nation. From then on the alternative to the creation of Pakistan lay in allowing the Muslims to share power equally with the Hindus. The principle of parity, however, was not Wavell's own innovation; he had borrowed it from an earlier scheme informally devised by a Hindu (Bhulabhai Desai) and a Muslim (Liaquat Ali Khan) in 1944.

At the time of the Conference's failure, Gandhi remarked to Wavell that the British "would have to decide sooner or later to come down on the side of Congress or the League", since the Hindus and the Muslims could not resolve their differences by themselves. What he actually meant by this was that if the British ever felt able to abandon their imperial sense of impartiality, they would have no option but to support Congress, for justice and truth lay only on the Congress side. Wavell ignored this suggestion and maintained his impartiality until he realized that the Labour government had opted for Congress. This realization took place during the visit to India, in March-June 1946, of the three Cabinet Ministers - Cripps, Pethick-Lawrence and Alexander. Wavell believed that two of them had conspired at Congress's dishonest acceptance of the Cabinet's plan.

With the return of the Cabinet mission to London and the formation of the interim government, there began the second phase of Wavell's career. He believed that Congress, now participating in the government of India, was intent on destroying the Muslim League and the hope of an independent Pakistan; and consequently deployed all his energy and talents to protect the League on the one hand and constrain Nehru's government on the other. Gandhi once again pleaded for Wavell's support for the Congress. This was another crucial moment in Indian history and *The Transfer of Power* is full of evidence to suggest that if Wavell had functioned merely as constitutional head of the government (as the Labour Cabinet wanted him to function), and had allowed the Congress to run the administration without any hindrance, events would have turned out differently. But Wavell had lost faith in the unity of India and he now believed that the creation of Pakistan was the only solution to the Indian problem.

He was right in his interpretation of Congress's motives, but wrong in his interpretation of the British Cabinet mission. Atlee's Ministers were not so partial to Congress as Wavell thought; they were committed to the view that a minority must not be allowed to place a veto on the political progress of the majority, that the Muslims constituted a minority, not a nation, and that Pakistan was not viable. At the same

time they believed that once their fears and suspicions were allayed, the Muslims would learn to run the affairs of India jointly with the Hindus and the unity of India would thus be maintained. The Mission's plan was therefore so devised as to appear experimental rather than definitive. The Muslim-majority provinces were given full autonomy but within an Indian union; they were also given the option of seceding, but only after ten years.

Although the plan foresaw such possibilities as an Indian confederation, a central government exercising minimum powers, and the Muslim-majority provinces becoming independent states, the planners hoped that none of these possibilities would be realized. Their intention was to implant mutual trust in the two contending parties, whose distrust of each other had become so chronic that even a noble gesture on the part of the one was suspected by the other of possessing some hidden meaning and evil design. Jinnah was the first to accept the plan, perhaps because Pakistan had been so firmly denied to him; but this was construed by Congress as a bad omen, for why else would Jinnah acquiesce unless he saw his dream of a larger Pakistan materializing through the plan? Congress thus became critical of certain possibilities contained within the plan and only gave its acceptance with strong reservations. In turn Jinnah became suspicious of Congress's intentions and retracted his acceptance.

As the documents in *The Transfer of Power* indicate, the British plan was based on a compromise scheme personally devised by Maulana Azad, a Muslim leader of the Congress. This scheme did not win Gandhi's approval, but at the time of the Cabinet Mission, Azad was the Congress President and thus in a position to win the Mission's attention. The Cabinet Plan did not go as far as Azad's scheme towards allaying Muslim fears but its provision for the compulsory grouping of provinces created panic in the Congress camp and ultimately led to its failure. Subsequently, the Cabinet Ministers themselves came to doubt the wisdom of this clause but their suggestion for making amends was ignored by Wavell.

The last major event of these years was the Mountbatten-Menon Plan for the partition of India. Volume Ten of *The Transfer of Power* series covers the first three months of Mountbatten's viceroyalty from March 22 to May 30, during which period the earlier British plan was finally abandoned, the inevitability of partition was recognized, and the plan for partition evolved through various stages. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre's *Mountbatten and the Partition of India* contains, in Part One, a record of interviews the authors held with Mountbatten between 1971 and 1973, and, in Part Two, extracts from Mountbatten's personal reports and official correspondence, most of which are now available in Volume Ten of *The Transfer of Power*. The interviews are of poor quality: the interviewers asked leading questions and Mountbatten's responses to them in a rambling manner, repeating statements he had made many times before. The interviews do, however, yield a few items of new information which help to illuminate Mountbatten's style and also give some insight into his likes and dislikes. Mountbatten openly condemns for instance Jinnah; both had strong and different personalities which in the circumstances were bound to clash and when they did clash Mountbatten often felt he was being outmanoeuvred. Jinnah was also instrumental in frustrating Mountbatten's great ambition, which was to become the joint Governor-General of both India and Pakistan. Stafford Cripps is also attacked by Mountbatten; but it is difficult to take Mountbatten seriously when he says that Cripps was no leader because he was ambivalent: "You can't have leadership if you don't drink, don't smoke, don't eat, don't..."

The documents in *The Transfer of Power* clearly support the view that Mountbatten's role was no more than that of the Queen's Receiver of the Raj. Although his instructions from Atlee were to obtain "a unitary Government for British India and the Indian States, if possible within the British Commonwealth", and he was given eight months until October 1, 1947, to try for this kind of settlement, he



Tipu's tiger, a painted wooden effigy captured at the fall of Seringapatam in 1799. From The Indian Museum 1801-1879 by Ray Desmond (215pp, HMSO, £25, 0 11 580088 3).

decided, less than a month after his arrival in India, that the cabinet Mission plan could not be revived, because Jinnah seemed to be set against it, and therefore partition was the only course to follow. This is not to suggest that if he had tried harder he might have succeeded; nevertheless, the impression one gets is that he did not try very hard.

Admittedly Mountbatten was no innovator; he was also poor on analysis or exposition and although he excelled in the ability to persuade, there is not a single instance of his exercising this over Jinnah. Indeed, the bullying and bluffing which characterized his style were singularly missing in his dealings with Jinnah. The documents, however, may explain why Mountbatten did not press Jinnah to accept the Cabinet plan. It would have been unfair to impose the plan on him without the "compulsory grouping" clause which Mountbatten himself did not like. Moreover, from his several interviews with the Congress leaders, Mountbatten had gathered that they themselves, thanks to their unhappy association with the League leaders in the coalition government, had become reconciled to the idea of partition, provided Bengal and Punjab were also divided so as to prevent Jinnah from assimilating into his Pakistan the Hindu parts of those provinces.

Jinnah's somewhat exaggerated initial reaction to the prospect of inheriting a "moth-eaten" Pakistan caused Mountbatten instantly to concentrate on persuading him to accept it. The more Jinnah rebelled the more determined Mountbatten became. Even so, right up to the last moment, on June 2, 1947, he was not sure whether Jinnah would go along with the Congress leaders in accepting partition. Mountbatten's concern might have been the consequence of his belief that the truncated Pakistan which he was obliged to offer to Jinnah was not viable and that sooner or later it would disintegrate, with part or even the whole of it reverting to India. Nehru too was led into the same world of make-believe and in some measure this experience weakened his resistance to partition. Another of Mountbatten's beliefs, which he mentioned to me in the course of an interview, was that if he had become Viceroy of India earlier than he did, he would have succeeded in preserving the unity of India, from which one may infer that he believed partition had become inevitable by the time he appeared on the scene.

Most of the ideas which went into the plan were contributed by the bureaucrats. Even the initial idea of giving a united Bengal the option of becoming an independent state was jointly sponsored by the British governor of Bengal, its Muslim Chief

The Indira era

Hugh Tinker

S. Nihal Singh
My India
130pp, Vikas, £5.50.
0 7069 1770 7

S. Nihal Singh has excellent credentials. He is a former editor of *The Statesman*, like Ian Stephens, and a former editor-in-chief of the *Indian Express*, like Frank Moraes. He writes lucidly, pungently, with an intriguing story to tell: this is no less than to explain in detail how Jawaharlal Nehru's India became Indira Gandhi's India (perhaps this is why he chose to adopt a title which is both grandiloquent and seemingly sentimental: he has modulated experienced this trans-mutation very personally and intensely).

Why did the ideals of the "Freedom Movement" fade and die so rapidly? Before independence, Congress leaders endured jail and privation. When they achieved power in 1947 they enjoyed its perquisites but (in the author's words) still preserved "a certain regard for moral precepts". Under Indira, "one's political career was dependent on pleasing one person; where was the need to conform to any standards?". So, Nihal Singh charts the decline from "political innocence" into corruption.

He lays the blame for all this upon the urban middle class, the main beneficiaries of the British departure. "The Indian middle class is crass, materialistic and worships wealth and success," he declares. "They imitate the manners of the West and are obsessed with retaining its good opinion."

Yet Nihal Singh believes that all this is superficial. Western ideas have put down only shallow roots. He argues that Nehru's failure to move the country over which he exercised sway for so long into modernity was due to his trying to impose "foreign" views upon the people. "Though the Congress leaders and their followers deferred to his views and waxed eloquent over them in public they went on merrily practising and believing in the caste philosophy." When he was gone, any inhibition about exploiting caste for sectional, personal or political advantage departed. His daughter, with her pragmatic brand of politics, played this game skillfully, so says S. Nihal Singh. He provides a detailed account of the Indira era as he has observed it from his own position of close contact.

Nihal Singh endeavoured - almost on his own - to preserve the journalistic independence of his paper throughout the Emergency. The victory of the Janata coalition seemed to reaffirm the Indian commitment to the democracy which had been pulverized. It didn't last long. Nihal Singh recalls meeting the octogenarian Morarji Desai who now became prime minister - still very puritan yet "more tolerant of human foibles". Despite massive public goodwill, Janata rapidly lost support by losing its way. The party which had denounced corruption and tyranny was seen to be arbitrary and corrupt. There were a few able individuals - the author singles out the Foreign Minister, A. B. Vajpayee - but the rest occupied themselves in internecine struggle. They brought about their own collapse, which this book records as "the low water mark in India's practice of parliamentary democracy" worse than the

abrogation of democracy by Emergency decree.

Like most Indian commentators today, Nihal Singh accepts the Indira era as a "No Alternative" phenomenon. He describes contemporary Indian politicians and politics as "putty to be shaped by the will of a woman". When Sanjay was in power it seemed probable that she would eventually promote him as prime minister, reserving for herself the position of president: though exercising more of a executive hand than the Indian president had done hitherto. After Sanjay's death the future became more clouded and her importance unique: as Singh observes "It is ironical but true to tradition the destiny of India should be dependent upon one person."

This, then, is a fatalistic view of contemporary India. Nihal Singh writes perceptively and persuasively of the problems, the dilemmas, he has a very clear notion where it is all leading. He sees the greatest hope in the emergence of another Mahatma. Gandhi, he considers, was more comprehensible to political Indians than was Nehru. Yet, he concludes, Gandhi, dead, was quickly forgotten. His teachings were worshipped, but ignored. The message of the Mahatma should be about equality, he says. India today, the risk is that the rich will become richer while the poor get poorer, only someone could light the spark to fire the imagination of the people and be halfway to victory. But the note of optimism seems forced, uncertain.

Disillusionment may be an unfortunate illusion that it does not provide the impetus for revolution, and that India can be revitalized.

Hitler's lost opportunity

M. E. Yapp

MILAN HAUNER

India in Axis Strategy: Germany, Japan, and Indian Nationalists in the Second World War
750pp, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
3 12 915340 3

At one time or another most historians will have reproved an impetuous student with the solemn assertion that history is about what actually happened, and not about what might have been. What hypocrites we all are. Some of the best history is the history of what might have been and Milan Hauner's large and fascinating investigation of back-room strategy as revealed in British and German archives is a good demonstration of the truth of this contention. Hauner's might-have-been runs as follows. By failing to co-ordinate their activities in 1942 the Axis powers missed a golden opportunity. If Germany had pressed determinedly towards India from the west and Japan from the east, and if they had combined their attacks with a pledge of freedom from colonial rule for the peoples of the Middle East and South Asia the war might have developed in a very different fashion from the course it took. The question Hauner seeks to answer is: why was this Indian strategy not adopted?

Fully to appreciate the attractions of this neglected strategy one must first comprehend the main elements in the century-old debate about the best way to defend British India. Four main threats to the Raj were discerned: invasion by a major power from outside India; a movement of frontier tribes, possibly assisted by a regional power (usually Afghanistan); a civil rebellion inside India; and a mutiny of the Indian Army. In isolation each of these threats could be managed; in combination they presented the most serious threat to the existence of British India, and if reinforcements could not easily be obtained from Britain the Raj was indeed in peril.

Because of the numerous enigmas and ironies it contains, and because of its tragic aftermath, the history of India's partition will continue to attract the attention of historians. Thanks to the volumes of *The Transfer of Power*, future studies of this great event should tend to be more objective.

Distribution in the United Kingdom: the second of the two titles reviewed here, Collins and Lapierre's Mountbatten and the Partition of India, has not been halted pending the outcome of discussions between the distributors and the Broadlands Archives Trust.

Nationalism's myth

T. R. Raychaudhuri

MILAN BOSE

The Last Hero: A Biography of Subhas Bose
318pp, Quartet, £15.
0 7043 2301 X

Subhas Chandra Bose - "Netaji" to millions of Indians - probably symbolizes for the Western liberal the ultimate degradation of colonial nationalism, its willingness to collaborate with Fascism itself in a short-sighted quest for early independence. The best of Western writings on Bose, notably Hugh Tinker's admirably objective biography, place the Indian leader's collaboration with the Axis powers in an appropriate perspective, but such academic exercises have had little impact on more generally held views, endorsed in some recent historical studies like S. Gopal's biography of Nehru. *The Last Hero* by Milind Bose is a deliberate attempt to achieve a balanced view between, on the one hand, the stigma of collaboration, and on the other the mindless hagiography which would explain away every political error committed by the leader; it is more successful on the first point than on the second. But even in this instance it is not a significant advance on Tinker's *The Springing Tiger* and Milind Hauner's monumental study of India in Axis strategy (a work not mentioned in Bose's bibliography, though Hauner's unpublished Cambridge thesis is cited).

The circumstances of Subhas Bose's involvement, first with the Germans and later with the Japanese, who recognized him as the head of a state, are now well known. That his concern, exclusively, was with Indian independence, that he was willing to go to any length to achieve this end, that he had little interest in the Axis war aims are now established facts of history. That he had little understanding of the same aims is also well known though somewhat underplayed by Indian writers. But his avowed lack of faith in Western-style democracy and parliamentary government, his belief in the excellence of a one-party system, his admiration for Fascist efficiency and the glamour of military discipline could all be cited as damning evidence of Fascist tendencies. Milind Bose mentions all this without deriving conclusions; he only implies that Bose was not a Fascist, despite appearances to the contrary.

Any reasonably careful study of Subhas Bose's own writings certainly supports such a view. At his very first encounter with Gandhi, he sought from the leader of non-violent non-cooperation a concrete plan of action and was disappointed by Gandhi's response. Throughout his subsequent career, he tried to formulate concrete plans - first, for the attainment of independence and, second, for the creation of a prosperous and equitable society once independence was achieved. His *The Indian Struggle* as well as his posthumous memoirs provide the blueprints for India's socio-economic reconstruction; there is nothing particularly Fascist in these projections. The explicit ideology of a socialist nationalization of the means of production and redistribution of wealth are emphasized. For the rest, there are stray items of proposed action expected to produce results quickly, rather like the "twenty points" of a later day. He found much to admire in both "Fascism" and "Communism" and does not appear to have perceived any fundamental difference between the two, being willing to borrow freely from both in order to achieve a synthesis suited to India's needs. His model, if any, was never attempted.

Kemal's Turkey. But he was perceptive enough to go beyond *ad hoc* programmes and initiate the first Planning Committee. Yet his anxiety for positive action was marked by a political naivety and the sort of unperceptive wishful thinking which failed to see Fascism for what it was; he prophesied Britain's conclusive defeat in the first year of the war as something not only inevitable, but eminently desirable.

Subhas Bose's role as the leader of militant nationalism, which is often somewhat misleadingly described as the "Congress left", remains an unexplored theme. Milind Bose sticks closely to the leader's activities and does not try to explain Subhas's spectacular initial success in challenging Gandhi and his subsequent political decline; a fact not adequately emphasized is that his Forward Bloc did, at first, enjoy very substantial support, though as an alternative to Gandhian leadership it soon ceased to be relevant. To understand why, one would need to look beyond Subhas's career, into the characteristic weaknesses of radical nationalism, its failure to mobilize or even concern itself with the most deprived, and at the same time to play successfully the power game of factional politics. Subhas, with all his emphasis on action, is a rather sad figure at the head of a corrupt municipal body which he was unable to control, the leader of a futile *satyagraha* against the Black Hole monument, a symbol of little significance to most Indians. His desire for action found some fulfilment in his organization of the INA. Yet his main impact on the history of Indian nationalism was and continues to be, rather than a man of action, an assessment of his success and failures is essential to our understanding of Indian nationalism. That task has not yet been attempted.

against the Soviet Far East when a suitable opportunity presented itself: the navy advocated a southern campaign towards Australia; Yamamoto's Combined Staff argued for the east and Midway. After the Battle of Midway (June 1942) the navy was not in any condition to take advantage of a change in heart in the army and of the Quit India disturbances.

Although the lost Axis opportunity of 1942 is the centre of his book, Hauner lays the foundations for the consideration of that fateful year by a long and patient analysis of the first two years of the war. Before the opening of Barbarossa it was the traditional enemy, Russia, which was most feared in India. Asked by Cripps about Soviet designs on India, Molotov derided all such rumours as absurd fantasies. Nevertheless such speculations continued to haunt British strategists, who contemplated joint German-Soviet action against India. Indeed, the single German plan of this early period did hinge on Soviet agreement. The plan involved the replacement of the Musahiban dynasty in Afghanistan with the exiled former ruler, Amanullah, but never came to fruition.

Hauner devotes much space to Afghanistan - far more than he gives to Iran, which most observers have seen as much more important in the context of regional strategy. His reason is the potential possessed by German agents in Kabul, operating under diplomatic cover, to promote disturbances on the Indian frontier and within India. In fact the evidence he presents shows the singular incompetence of the German agents in Kabul; they relayed fantasies rather than information to Berlin. The source of their alleged information was a mysterious gentleman named Ruhmat Khan who deserves to be better known as he seems to have been a quadruple agent, working for Italy, Germany, Britain and the Soviet Union. What is even more curious is that each of his employers appears to have known, or to have strongly suspected, that he was working for the others. The absurdities of the Afghan

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situation prompt Hauner to offer some pleasing reflections upon the phenomenon of the bureaucratization of espionage; in remote Kabul it was enough for German agents to go through the motions of intrigue - pay, promotion and a comfortable life were sufficient reward. Fortunately, for Germany no one who mattered in Berlin seems to have paid any attention to the stories supplied by Kabul. The reader must, however, doubt whether there was really a great opportunity missed in Kabul: the Afghan government had no freedom of movement and the frontier tribes were less amenable to incitement than may be supposed.

Hauner also believes that a second opportunity was missed when the Axis powers failed to employ to full advantage the Indian revolutionary nationalist, Subhas Chandra Bose. He has unearthed much information about Bose's time in Germany and East Asia and about the useless Indian Legion in the west and the ill-fated Indian National Army in the east. He admits that Bose's stories about the influence of his supporters in India were obvious fabrications but still contends that Bose was the single man who might have raised a revolution in India. The theory is not convincing. Opinion is still bitterly divided on the question of whether Bose was a romantic revolutionary or a revolutionary

From poverty to poetry

T. J. Byres

DAVID SELBOURNE

Through the Indian Looking-Glass
230pp, ZED Press, 57 Caledonian Road, London N1, £5.50.
0 86232 091 7

In his excellent brief "Author's Note" and Acknowledgements, David Selbourne tells us that the articles and essays contained in *Through the Indian Looking-Glass* represent "a record of a personal struggle to come to terms with, and to say something about, the complex realities of the Indian political system, and the condition of its people". His chosen framework, it seems, is that of a Marxist political economy, and the categories which recur in his writing are those which derive therefrom. That writing is of two distinct kinds: "literary", mainly a long prose-poem and translations of Bengali poems; and "political", the journalism (for the most part) that makes up most of the book. Selbourne, having pointed to this distinction, does not, however, accept it. Instead, he argues that "both these modes of inquiry and expression are equally necessary to the illumination and understanding of the social order. Poetry and prose, however different technically - and even that is dubious - inhabit the same world of observation and discourse. And if they don't, they should". In an ideal sense, this is true. The "literary" and the "political" should indeed illuminate the same reality and reinforce one another. But they do not, necessarily, do so with equal power and distinction: what emanates from the same pen; they do not do so, equally, in David Selbourne's case. However admirable his stand during the Emergency and whatever the quality of his writing, he has asked to be judged according to a very high standard and it is not enough to say, apropos of the "literary" and the "political", "Moreover, it is up to the reader to help erase the distinctions falsely made between them." Where an author chooses to operate in both modes, a major responsibility falls upon him to try and match his imaginative power with analytical expertise. Selbourne does not respond equally to the exacting demands he has chosen to try and meet.

The "literary" writing is of a very high order. Selbourne evokes with rare intensity the atmosphere of India; juxtaposing images of demeaning poverty and insulating wealth; "a crocodile in red blazers" of upper-class schoolboys; beggars; a rickshaw driver; lepers; a village, stockaded

romancer. Few of those who hold the latter opinion will find anything in this book to change their minds; on the contrary, Bose appears not only as a very unpleasant man but also as a very silly one.

At one point Hauner comments that military planners seem "to follow the principle of paradoxical logic according to which reduced opportunities encourage more ambitious plans". Perhaps it is in something of the same spirit that he emphasizes the possibilities of Afghanistan and Bose. But every so often his own sense of realism intrudes and in a few transient paragraphs he demolishes many of the possibilities he has set out.

There is one aspect of the problem that he never questions. Like most Europeans from Napoleon to Hitler he assumes that India was of very great importance to Britain and that its loss would have been a grievous blow to the Allied cause. Yet there is another possibility, namely that by the second World War Britons were beginning to regard India as more of a liability than an asset and that if the Axis had adopted the Indian strategy the war might have been won by the Allies more quickly and more cheaply than was the case. There, indeed, is a fine night-have-been.

like a kral"; a "commercial director"; a washerwoman; "professors... walking quickly, armed with American Ph.D.s, and in a cloud of unknowing"; mineral labourers; the Taj Mahal (never, surely, so savagely or so effectively dealt with); a Bihar night-platform; the bringing-in of the harvest. We are left in no doubt that here is a society disfigured by grotesque inequality, crippling poverty and a callous disregard for human dignity. We must be thankful to the remarkable power with which that reality is conveyed but we must, also, try to comprehend why things are as they are and what the prospects for and the means of achieving change might be. It is to the "political" writing that one looks for such analysis.

The "political" essays and articles are mostly journalism and mostly brief. At one level, as journalism, they are effective: hard-hitting, and relentlessly critical of cant and political opportunism. But they do not constitute political economy. At their best, in, for example, "Through the Indian Looking-Glass" and "The Tale of the Wicked Prince", they proceed via an extended metaphor, which is used wittingly to point a moral. Mrs Gandhi and her late son, Sanjay, are the targets hit most effectively (the latter piece is an obituary on Sanjay, written in the form of a fable). But what these pieces lack, and what illuminating political economy must contain above all else, is effective class analysis. In fact, although Selbourne is not averse to upbraiding others for the absence of class analysis (see, for example, his "Letter to 'Unita'"), these essays contain no class analysis at all. We are given rhetoric instead of analysis, and assertion rather than a developed argument. Effective analysis in class terms can be brief; and it can be purveyed via journalism. Many examples might be adduced to illustrate the point (not least Marx's brilliant journalism of the early 1850s), but it would appear that, so far at least, Selbourne has underestimated the amount of detailed and painstaking work that is needed before a genuine political economy, that rises above slogans, can be achieved. In the last two decades, an impressive body of scholarship has been produced by Indian Marxists (historians, economists and others). It is a curious feature of *Through the Indian Looking-Glass* that in neither the "Author's Note" and Acknowledgements nor in any of the forty-four pieces is a single Indian Marxist scholar mentioned; nor is there any evidence of their work having been read. That is a great pity. A David Selbourne armed with both his imaginative powers and a command of the relevant political economy would be a formidable figure.

Handwritten signature or note in the right margin.

Opening the window on Europe

Filippo Donini

FRANCESCO PINO PONGOLINI

Il cento anni di Giuseppe Prezzolini
Catalogo della Mostra
Bibliografica

80pp. Lugano: Biblioteca cantonale.

GIUSEPPE PREZZOLINI

Diario 1942-1968
540pp. Milan: Rusconi. L.20,000.

For a writer whose first article appeared in 1903 to have still been active eighty years later is certainly an unusual achievement. Giuseppe Prezzolini was born in 1882, and died last month soon after his hundredth birthday was celebrated in Italy and at Lugano, where he lived. As well as the speeches, the decorations and the abundant praise that official Italy lavished upon him, the most fitting tribute was arranged by the Cantonal Library of Lugano: an exhibition of his more than fifty books (all in their first editions), many autograph letters, photographs and other interesting documents. Papini, Soffici, Salvemini, Croce, Gentile, Mussolini, Amendola, Casetti, and Bergson, Romain Rolland, Mauriac, Maurras, Sorel, the Alleanza dei Giochi di Italian and French writers (and politicians) are on show around the Grand Old Man of Italian letters who, unbelievably, grew to manhood in the lifetime of Verdi and Carducci, and outlived both Ungaretti and Montale.

Prezzolini's most productive years and those when his influence on Italian cultural life was most beneficial, were the first quarter of this century, from his meeting with Giovanni Papini in 1899 to his departure for Paris in 1925, where he became the Italian representative in that forerunner of the present UNESCO, the Institute for Intellectual Cooperation and the League of Nations. He helped Papini to found his excellent periodical, *Leonardo*, before founding his own review, *La voce*, which he edited for five years and continued to be its guiding light during its lifetime, as well as being responsible for the collection of books and pamphlets published under its imprint.

If the renaissance of Italian culture started by Croce at the beginning of the century developed into a vast movement which really transformed and modernized Italian cultural life, most of the credit must be given to *La voce*. A hitherto academic and parochial Italian literature was brought into contact with the most fertile trends of modern thought: a window was opened on Europe, and an invigorating gust of fresh air revived the dormant Italian intelligentsia. Exposed to the theories of Bergson, Croce, Marx, Sorel and William James, Italian writers freed themselves from the positivist chains that had long imprisoned them. The poets discovered that beside Carducci, Pascoli and D'Annunzio there were other masters, such as Rimbaud, Mallarmé, Valéry, Apollinaire. The artists learnt to appreciate not only the Impressionists, but the Cubists, the Fauves, the Surrealists. A sort of cultural revolution took place, out of which emerged the new poets Campana, Ungaretti and Montale, as well as the painters, Boccioni, De Chirico and Carrà.

But literature and the arts were not the main interest of Prezzolini and his fellow contributors to *La voce* (who soon became known as *Vociani*). One of their aims was to resist the Latin inclination towards literary otium; thus Prezzolini: "Our moral conditions would be much better if there were more young people who could read and understand a budget or a blueprint, rather than producing mediocre stories or silly poems by the dozen." Accordingly, much of *La voce* was dedicated to moral, philosophical, political and sociological questions. Two of the problems which even today beset the Italian Government in its effort to modernize the country were studied and discussed with prophetic vision: the question of the South and the necessity for regional administration. And the list of writers whom Prezzolini studied, wrote about or translated confirms his predilection for the nourishing rather than for the

beautiful: Machiavelli, Croce, the German mystics, Novalis, Hume, Swift, Sorel, Mauriac, Tolstoy, Jack London, Stevenson.

The First World War did not dampen the fervour and activity of the *Vociani*. Prezzolini joined Mussolini's campaign for Italian intervention and was indirectly responsible for sending many young Italians to their death. His views differed from those of the Nationalists, who wanted "a greater Italy", from D'Annunzio, with his infatuation with the "beauty" of war, and also from the doctrine of the Futurists about the "hygienic function" of war. He accepted war "as a situation inherent in human nature", accordingly he volunteered for the army and did his duty as a soldier, but served his country also with his pen. The anthology that he assembled after Caporetto, of letters from the front and articles, poems and documents about the war, was meant to boost morale.

His essays on Caporetto and on Vittorio Veneto, the battles that marked the nadir and zenith of the Italian military effort, are among his best writings, especially the first, with its paradoxical thesis that the notorious defeat, far from being a blot on Italian honour and pride, was actually a moment of glory. In fact, writes Prezzolini, "peoples are never so great as when they recognize their own weaknesses and show their ability to learn from their setbacks". Paradoxical, too, was his contribution to the political struggle that divided Italy after Mussolini's seizure of power, at the time when Fascism was trying to consolidate its hold on the country by means of the savage elimination of Mussolini's opponents. In 1924 Prezzolini wrote two "profiles" of Mussolini and of Amendola; admiration for George Sorel and contempt for the liberal democratic politicians who ruled Italy before Fascism were perhaps the only feelings that he shared with Mussolini, but with Amendola he had a longer and closer relationship, which he did not hide in his book.

The scheme beneath the surface

David Robey

DOUG THOMPSON

Cesare Pavese: A study of the major novels and poems.
292pp. Cambridge University Press.
£22.50.
0 521 23602 9

Pavese's novels about city life in Turin and country life in the Piedmontese *Langhe* are among the earliest and most respected examples of Italian neo-realism. They led the return to everyday, regional topics and a conversational narrative style that characterized a great deal of Italian fiction in the immediate post-war years (Pavese committed suicide in 1950). Yet they stand apart from most writing of this type not only because of their remarkable technical competence, but also because of the powerful originality of their subject-matter: notably their isolated, introspective protagonists, the mysterious and often savage relationships between individuals, and the evocative local atmospheres.

Pavese, however, refused to call himself a neo-realist. His later novels, and to some extent his earlier ones as well, were inspired by an elaborate dualistic theory of human nature, consisting in a series of oppositions between childhood and adulthood, the primitive and the civilized, the countryside and the town. The theory is expounded at some length in Pavese's essays, his literary diary *Il mestiere di vivere*, and a set of symbolic mythological conversations entitled *Dialoghi con Leuco*. The task of the writer of fiction, Pavese came to believe in the early 1940s, was not to record the surface details of characters and settings, but to clarify the essential features of human existence in terms of the oppositions on which this theory rested.

His moderate praise of certain aspects of Mussolini's policies, together with the fact that in 1930 he accepted the directorship of the undisputedly fascist Casa Italiana di Columbia University, had much bearing on Prezzolini's reputation in Italy after the end of Fascism. But when America entered the war he was not considered *persona non grata* and was allowed to continue his teaching of Italian literature and his editorial activities which culminated in the publication in 1946 of his monumental *Bibliographical Repertory of Italian Literature from 1903 to 1942*. He spent more than thirty years in New York, and was considered through his writings to be an authoritative interpreter of Italy to the Americans and of America to the Italians though his definition of the Italo-Americans as "half an-Italian, half un-American" did not endear him to their powerful lobbies. But his readers in Italy grew more and more numerous, his contributions more and more appreciated by Italian editors, so that in 1962, although he was by then an American citizen, he said good-bye to New York and went back to Italy.

It was, however, a brief honeymoon. Disgusted with Italian imprecision and lack of punctuality, with the strikes, terrorism and the unfairness of Italian taxation, he left Italy again in 1968 and settled in Lugano. The fact is that Prezzolini, although very Italian in his individualism and irritability, was somehow un-Italian in his seriousness of purpose, his care for precision, his disregard for appearances.

More books emerged from his study at Lugano. He went back to his beloved Machiavelli, with an essay on pessimism in him and in St Augustine. In answer to a Roman Catholic campaign to recall him to the Christian fold he produced a pamphlet entitled *God is a Risk* which prompted Pope Paul VI to write him a note which is also on show at Lugano. He collected and edited his voluminous correspondence with Soffici, Papini, Croce, Boine, De Luca; and finally he published his *Journal*.

The first volume, *Diario 1900-1941*, appeared in 1978; covering, as it does, Prezzolini's most active period, the years of *La voce*, the war, his controversial attitude towards Fascism and his first contact with the American way of life, it is an admirable collection of portraits, comments on major historical events, and anecdotes and asides that throw much light on the times. The diaries serve not only to widen our knowledge of Prezzolini's life and thought, but they constitute an invaluable source of information on the conditions and evolution of Italian society, politics and literature.

The same can certainly be said of the second volume, *Diario 1942-1968*, although Prezzolini's personal participation in national and international events of the time was obviously less intense and less fruitful. But his comments on the American and the Allies' conduct of the war, the Italian invasion and armistice, and the emergence of Russia as a world power, still seem extraordinarily pertinent and acute. Many of his prophecies have come true: "The real winners will be the Russians" (1942); "The Allies work for Russia and build up the powerful enemy of to-morrow" (1945); "As soon as the Americans go away, the Italian monarchy will disappear" (1943); "With the domination of a large part of the world... the Americans will be hated everywhere" (1943); "Who knows whether there will soon be another war... I put my money on peace... but the hostilities will go on" (1955).

On a personal plane a remarkable characteristic of this journal of Prezzolini's old age is the frequency of the erotic passages. The attraction of the woman with whom he was in love and the delight of her embraces are sometimes described with uninhibited ardour and a frankness of detail that some authors of his age might find embarrassing, and some readers unseemly. But Prezzolini in his eighties was not concerned with morals or conventions of good taste (two of his pages are taken up by considerations

on his own propensity to fart), and although here and there in the journal he declares that only his beloved ladies were to read his confessions before destroying them, he then decided to publish them without restriction: no expiation is given for this momentary change of mind.

Perhaps all this comes from his irrepressible anti-conformism and desire to shock, an aspect of his personality that was already remarkable in his youth, but which grew more and more prominent in his old age. And the Italian reader will find much that is shocking in this journal. From 1942, when the Italians were reluctantly fighting an unpopular war to 1968, the year of the student revolution and the giant step forward of the working class, they are seen by Prezzolini as marching irresponsibly to their own destruction, and they are the object of his unrelenting vituperation and scorn. Nothing is sacred, not even that formidable source of Italian self-respect and pride, the Risorgimento: "In order to remake Italy, we have: do away with its unity" is one of its mottoes. To Prezzolini Garibaldi was a mediocre adventurer, very much like Fidel Castro, Mazzini a dreamer. Cavour a clumsy gangster. No wonder that when President Pertini, on the occasion of Prezzolini's hundredth birthday, asked him whether he ever crossed into Italy from Lugano, he answered: "Yes, I come to Italy once a week, to buy my vegetables."

Yet Italy honoured him as a reverend and enthusiastic. Even the people from the South, whom he once described as "an inferior race, mingled with Africans", have done him proud. A plaque was placed on the front of his house where he lived for six years, a Vietri, near Salerno, despite the fact that the inhabitants of Vietri called by him "human beasts" and he wanted the name of Salerno to be changed to *Fecopoli* (Shit-town). Fair-minded people will ascribe this of reverence to a civilized sense of generosity. But who can be sure that Prezzolini did not take it as evidence of inferiority?

The Gnomes and how they grew

Jonathan Steinberg

NICHOLAS FAITH

Safety in Numbers: The Mysterious World of Swiss Banking
368pp. Hamish Hamilton. £9.95.
0 241 10743 1

In my banking days I once did a deal with a Swiss bank. My employer, a venerable German merchant bank, had a large client, a coffee importer. The client wanted favourable terms to finance a huge consignment of Brazilian coffee, terms which we found it hard to meet. The Deutschbank was not yet freely convertible and domestic interest rates were high. My boss instructed me to get in touch with one of our Zurich correspondent banks. Two hours later the Swiss banker rang back with a scheme to finance the import by using the idle credit balances in the Brazilian-Czechoslovak clearing arrangement. By the time he had explained to me how Brazilian-Czechoslovak clearing dollars could be swapped against national commodities being shunted in the opposite direction, I had a chart on the pad in front of me that looked like the wiring for a complicated piece of electrical equipment. It was a terrific feat of financial sleight-of-hand, and what is more, it worked. Other than that we saw big three banks (Credit Suisse, the Union Bank of Switzerland, the Swiss Banking Corporation) rarely impinged on our banking activities. Nicholas Faith makes it clear why. Until the early 1970s the Swiss big three were not even among the top fifty world banks. Indeed, part of the value of the book is to outline how recent and comparatively fragile the international prestige of the Gnomes of Zurich has been.

Early in the book Mr Faith demolishes many of the myths surrounding the famous banking secrecy and the legends about numbered accounts. Clause 47(b) of

the 1934 Swiss Banking Act simply states the penalties (fine and/or imprisonment) for a banker or auditor who violates "the discretion which he is bound to observe by virtue of the law on professional secrets". This small addendum to a large bill has been the basis on which both legal and often illegal fortunes have been safely concealed in Swiss account-books. He makes short work too of the convenient Swiss myth that the clause was introduced to protect hardy Swiss bankers against the enquiries of the Nazi authorities trying to find Jewish assets held outside Germany.

There is also much interesting material on the struggle between the Allied authorities and the Swiss over their role as suppliers of goods and services to Nazi Germany during the war, over the possession of frozen assets, over the determination of the rightful ownership of gold looted by the Nazis and then discreetly sold by them through compliant Swiss banking friends and so on. There is a good account of the fall of one of the Geneva private banks and another on the Texaco scandal of the 1970s. In fact the book is stuffed with interesting tidbits but "stuffed" is the operative word. Faith is constitutionally incapable of leaving anything out. Here is a typical paragraph from his description of the Texaco scandal, a description incidentally which adds nothing to what was available in the newspapers at the time:

The technique [that is, the protagonist, Herr Kührmeier] used was not unusual; he founded Texaco as a *Finanzanstalt* in Liechtenstein with the help of his friends and neighbours, the law firm of Franco Maspoli (who died in 1974) and Alfred Nosedà. In his day, Nosedà's father had been one of the most highly respected lawyers in the Ticino, regarded as such even by Nello Celio, another lawyer of Ticinese origins, who was a friend of his. Shortly after the war John Nosedà was murdered by a local

tradesman who accused him of being responsible for his ruin. Thanks to his father's impeccable reputation Alfredo was able to attract reputable associates, including Dr Elbio Gada, a former director of the cantonal tax office, and Dr Alessandro Villa, who had previously been in charge of the cantonal company register.

Now, the only relevant item in that paragraph are the facts that Kührmeier had respectable local lawyers to front for him and that their office was next to his.

Page after page of names, places, dates pass by the dazed reader and, to make it all more confusing, Faith rarely explains the wider context of the events. Take the year 1974, a bad year for Swiss and German banks, several of which made huge losses on foreign exchange deals. The Union Bank lost over 150 million Swiss francs and Lloyds Bank's Lugano Branch 100 million. The German Herstatt Bank went broke. Faith is so busy, breathlessly listing the names and identities of all the characters, that he never tells the reader why it happened. To explain rather than describe, he would have had to pause for thought and to say something about the operation of foreign exchange markets after the Yom Kippur War. In short, there were reasons why so many disasters occurred then.

The Herstatt case is not untypical. Herstatt, a medium-sized German merchant bank, part of a larger concern, was ruined by the speculation of its chief foreign exchange dealer. If, as Churchill remarked during the First World War, Admiral Jellicoe was the only man who could lose the war in an afternoon, the chief dealer of a bank is the only man who can ruin a bank in the day. The churning of petro-dollars which the Arab-Israeli War of 1973 and the quadrupling of the oil price brought on to financial markets flushed sums across the exchanges which dealers had literally never seen before. Foreign exchange transactions involving units of one, five, ten, twenty and ultimately

even fifty million dollars, became common. Such a sale or purchase takes place in a matter of seconds and good practice requires a prudent dealer to cover by making an equal and opposite transaction to limit liability in any one currency. At such a volume of business, the opportunity to make a fortune quickly flickered before the eyes of dealers all over the world. Leave the odd twenty million uncovered and guess which way the market was moving and a bank (or a dealer, if bent) could make unimaginable profits. Guess wrong and the bank might be out of business.

The really remarkable fact about 1974 is not that many banks suffered huge losses but that relatively few did. Even more remarkable was the rapid adjustment of the world's banking system to the huge pool of unwanted dollars sloshing about the channels of international finance. New types of banks sprang up, new techniques for recycling and new cooperative ventures emerged to cope. The prudent stuck to the old rules. Cover your deals and you can sleep at night.

Of all this there is not a whisper in Faith's book and that is for two reasons. The first is that business history is not easy to write convincingly. The author must know the business from the inside sufficiently well to see the interrelationship between persons and structures. Faith is too busy trying to puff what is often dull and technical material full of artificial liveliness to reflect on its real significance. I doubt if a popular piece of non-fiction can be written on the Swiss banking system. Paul Erdman, whom, like Faith, I admire, has done the job in his financial thrillers and, as a good ex-Swiss banker, made a fortune while doing so. But he had two advantages over Faith. He could romanticize his characters and he knew from the inside how the mechanisms of banking actually work.

The other reason why the enterprise fails is that to identify the "Swissness" of the Swiss banking system is to make comparisons with what is not Swiss.

Here too Faith fails to see the wood for the trees. German-Swiss banking (and it would have helped if he had been able to read German) only became remarkable late in the day. Until 1914 the German-Swiss banks fitted the pattern of *Universalbank* developed in France and Germany in the mid-nineteenth century. Such banks were less financial intermediaries than agencies for the investment of capital. The financial side took care of itself because European currencies were tied to a gold standard and because London provided the world's financial services. The rise of the German-Swiss banking world is the reciprocal of the collapse of the Pax Britannica, a collapse hastened by the autarchic and suspicious policies followed by the European states between the wars. Switzerland became the free free market in a world of regulated markets. The really big boom of the period after the Second World War reflected the further collapse of currency stability, the failure of the world's governments to deal with inflation, the vast trade deficits run by the United States and latterly the undigestible paper fortunes of the oil producers.

In spite of its limitations, *Safety in Numbers* makes one very important point: a system which conceals financial transactions from legitimate domestic authority leads to corruption. Faith quotes Whitney North Seymour, US Attorney in New York: "Secrecy and subterfuge are the white-collar criminal's best friends. The surest invitation to illegal conduct that man can devise is a hidden conduit for transmission of funds safe from the eyes of law enforcement officials." Much of the odium which the Swiss have earned for behaving as they have is unjustified but the absolute defence of banking secrecy is, as Faith demonstrates, something quite different. It has taken the Swiss, the most democratic of all Europe's peoples, too long to accept that there are some business deals in which the moral costs are simply too high.

Billionaires balked

Richard Lambert

STEPHEN FAY

The Great Silver Bubble

275pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 28370 X

Queues stretched down Halton Garden in the first week of 1980 - along New York's Forty-Seventh Street too, and anywhere else that merchants buy and sell silver. The old ladies with plastic bags and the businessmen with briefcases all had one objective: to turn whatever bits of silver they possessed into hard cash at what they could see was a ridiculously high price. Yet what seemed the obvious reaction to the public was of no interest to the people responsible for driving silver bullion to a peak of \$50 an ounce that January, more than five times the level of the previous summer. Two Texas billionaires, Bunker Hunt and his brother William Herbert, in association with a couple of Saudi princes and their front men, were busy putting together a silver hoard which at its high point was worth more than the combined gross national products of Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. For them, the sky seemed the limit. But the bubble burst, as it always does, and always do, and as it went it threatened for a moment to blow a hole in the banking system which had enabled it to be inflated in the first place. As things turned out, the outcome was not nearly as dire as it might have been. But the affair did illustrate some rather alarming features of the present financial scene.

The first is that the banks are hungry to lend money, and in some circumstances are prepared to take extraordinary risks on a borrower's creditworthiness. The Hunts borrowed the best part of \$1,000,000,000 (\$1 billion) to finance their speculation, but did not have to show any of their lenders a consolidated statement of

their loans. At a time when the demand for loans was slack, they had no trouble in raising enormous sums simply on the strength of their names.

The list of their main lenders is revealing. It included the First National Bank of Chicago, which had made a bad mistake over interest rates in 1979, and had reason to chase business which might return a quick profit. It also took in a disproportionate number of foreign banks, which must have regarded the Hunts as a heaven-sent opportunity to break into the US market.

The Hunt affair also showed that despite its wide range of regulatory agencies, the US government is not well organized to handle a fast-moving and complex financial crisis. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission, which could have intervened at an early stage, appears to have been no match for the Hunts. Its staff was inexperienced, and disparately aware of its lack of authority in the market-place. The Commissioners themselves seem to have been hardly on speaking terms. Only at a very late stage was the Treasury, with its executives appear to have been stunned by what they found.

The denouement came in the most improbable setting - the Florida coastal resort of Boca Raton, where quite by chance the chief executives of the big US banks as well as key government officials were attending the annual meeting of the Federal Reserve City Bankers Association. The Hunt brothers appeared there too, and after considerable haggling agreed to trade the odd billion of assets with their creditors in return for having their loans refinanced. If the stakes had not been so high, the whole thing would have been a farce.

The eventual settlement of the Hunt loans illustrated another truth: now being exploited by half a dozen big US companies, not to mention a few nation states: if your debts are big enough, the banks will go to extreme

lengths to keep you in business. Paul Volcker, who as chairman of the Federal Reserve played an important role in the affair as the United States' central banker, had no reason to love the Hunts. His main interest was, and is, in the stability and continuity of the established financial system - something which is not compatible with multi-billion-dollar gambles in the bullion market. But that stability could equally have been threatened if a number of brokerage houses or banks had been allowed to go down in the wake of the silver price. So although he did not actively back the banks' support operation, Volcker certainly took no steps to oppose it.

Finally, the silver story shows that although market forces will eventually work, a great deal of damage can be done to innocent people before they take effect. Even the wealthiest speculator cannot hold the price of a commodity at an unreal level for ever: one way or another, supply will rise to meet demand; but in the meantime industrial users of that commodity can face real hardship, and the whole system of credit may be placed at risk.

Stephen Fay's account in *The Great Silver Bubble* makes gripping reading when it deals with matters of public record - the inadequacy of the regulatory agencies, the growing sense of alarm in the market-place, the eventual settlement and the post-mortem which followed. It also gives a very clear and comprehensive explanation of the extremely complicated way in which the commodity markets operate. The main characters, however, are by nature as secretive as they are unlovable. Texas billionaires and Saudi princes are not in the habit of revealing their thoughts to the world, and Fay is occasionally driven both to flights of fancy and to rather irritating *Dallas*-style wailing.

His may yet be the best account that we will get of this story, but it still does not provide a satisfactory answer to the most interesting question: what drives unimagined rich people to behave in such a fashion?

Rise of a Randlord

Geoffrey Wheatcroft

ROBERT L. FISH

Rough Diamond: The Incredible Story of Barney Barnato
348pp. Heinemann. £6.95.
0 437 26345 1

By a freak of geology the richest diamond pipes in the world lie in South Africa, at Kimberley, close to the Orange river, and the greatest gold field is on the Witwatersrand no more than 250 miles to the north-east. The two were found within twenty years of each other in the 1870s and 1880s. Before this South Africa had been little regarded. Its white population was small and its economy was insignificant. But the discovery of diamonds and then gold brought a rush of fortune-seekers from England, Europe and America. Few found the fortunes they sought, but a handful did, and having become very rich in Kimberley went on to become richer still on the Rand - hence the name the London press gave to these magnates, the Randlords.

Of all of them none was more famous in his day than Barney Barnato, of whose life - or "incredible story" as the subtitle unfortunately has it - Robert Fish's book is a fictionalized account. Barnato was a London Jew, born Barnett Isaacs in humble (though not wretched) circumstances, who went to the Cape in 1874. Fish describes the main episodes in his life: his first appearance in Kimberley as a cigar peddler, semi-professional boxer and music-hall entertainer, his rise in the diamond trade, the epic battle with Rhodes for control of the Kimberley mine, the move to Johannesburg, the Jameson Raid (when Barnato remained outside the conspiracy), and his death in June 1897 when he threw himself (if he did) from the steamer, taking him to England.

Historical novelists cannot be criticized on factual grounds and Fish

says that he has changed "some names, some dates, and some events", a convenient let-out. He is entitled to suggest that Barnato didn't jump from the deck of the SS Scot, but was pushed. Even if it is not true, it was believed by some at the time. It is odd, however, that his final chapter is dated "June 1896".

But if a book such as this cannot reasonably be expected to cast much light on the realities of gold-mining and share-pushing (the latter of which Barnato was better at than the former) it has to meet the modest criteria of popular fiction. Fish was - the book is alas published posthumously - a well-known American thriller writer. He is out of his depth with a historical subject. Dialogue and vocabulary are all over the place, prochronistic ("streetwise"; "get his rocks off") or drawn from the wrong country ("derby" for bowler hat, "kike" for Jew). Cockney speech is difficult enough for English writers. Fish is a warning against Americans attempting it. Equally, it is unlikely that Rhodes's partner Charles Rudd - Harrow and Trinity - would have called someone "a bleeding genius".

There is also the problem of imparting necessary information. Here, Rhodes addresses a board meeting of De Beers with a long résumé of their activities, adding, "I'm repeating this although you know the facts as well as I do, because I want you to realize the full importance of the operation we are about to start." All the same, the fascination of the subject can never pall. More books, fiction and non-fiction will be written (André Brink is currently writing a screenplay about Barnato for South African television). Some publisher should release Louis Cohen's two entrancing books - of memoirs, *Reminiscences of Kimberley* and *Reminiscences of Johannesburg and London*, which deal much with Barnato. They are not necessarily, in their entirety, much more veracious than Fish's book, but they have a vitality which few novelists can match.

Ulysses

After your salt adventures to come home to that small island which was marvellous once when you were a boy,

to see it appearing in its tiny doom out of the waves which once made harmony is the shadow on your brain.

Ambition dwindles to the commonplace and all your adventures like the echoes heard on the headland in the night.

A reversing of the journey to its source now so impure so shadowy so dull which once was sonorous.

Only you heard it as you levelled sail entering harbour in apparent triumph the soft touch like a sigh.

Iain Crichton Smith

to the editor

Pierre Laval and the Jews

Sir, - I find Richard Grenier's impassioned defence of Pierre Laval (in his review of Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton's *Vichy France and the Jews*, July 23) astonishing and rather disturbing. Perhaps I have misread Marrus and Paxton. But from my reading of their book, I was given to understand that it was Laval who had put up a defence of French Jews, especially ex-servicemen, that Laval had shown little active interest in the matter, and that his main contribution had been to ensure that Jews due for deportation should be accompanied by their children, in order to prevent families from being divided. The result was that, in most cases, the children perished with their parents.

Laval was prime minister at a time when the French authorities, prefects and sub-prefects, were protesting vigorously at the infringement of French sovereignty by the Italian military authorities in the departments on the left bank of the Rhône, from the Isère to the Alpes-Maritimes, for sabotaging Vichy anti-semitic legislation and for attempting to save both French and foreign Jews who had taken refuge in the south-east by giving them Italian *laissez-passer*. Laval was certainly concerned that the *organisation des biens juifs* should remain in the hands of French administrators in both zones, because he wanted the profits from the pillaged Jewish properties and assets to go to French profiteers rather than to German ones. Nor can it be argued that Laval saved many young Frenchmen from the STO. They saved themselves. *Of course* the Germans found Laval "duplicitous and untrustworthy", he was both. He thought - wrongly - that he could fool the Germans, or do a bargain with them, or both.

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In Defence of Swinburne

Sir, - Dick Davis starts his review (July 16) of *Swinburne Selected Poems*, edited by L. M. Findlay, by asking: "Is it possible for us to read

Swinburne with a straight face?" And he adds, "It was certainly possible for Hardy and Pound." He could have added T. S. Eliot too. "We may take it as undisputed", Eliot said, "that Swinburne did make a contribution; that he did something that had not been done before, and that what he did will not turn out to be a fraud." While explaining why the present generation (Eliot was writing in the second decade of this century) did not greatly enjoy Swinburne, he stated: "the words which we use to state our grounds of dislike or indifference cannot be applied to Swinburne, as they can to bad poetry." But Davis does apply those words quite freely, and what his words express is not so much dislike or indifference, as prejudice - prejudice based on his inability to appreciate Swinburne's poetry. Davis feels able to speak on behalf of modern readers of poetry and to decide what is "possible for them to read with a straight face" and what isn't, the implication being that those who don't agree with him can hardly be regarded as modern, can hardly be any of us.

But Eliot, who, it will be generally agreed, had a better claim to speak for modern readers even today than Davis, and who was more intelligently conscious of Swinburne's limitations, knew how to balance - Davis doesn't even try - those limitations with Swinburne's positive qualities as a poet. "You may say 'diffuse'", Eliot was to remark, "but the diffuseness is essential; had Swinburne practised greater concentration his verse would be, not better in the same kind, but a different thing. His diffuseness is one of his glories."

But for all his show of interest in the tone, technique, form and structure of Swinburne's poetry, Davis is not really interested in such discriminatory analysis and approach. He lets "giggles" - yawning, laughing or cursing - do the job of a critical evaluation for him. Similarly, for all his inwardness with modern poetry, what we get from him is merely the unsubstantiated generality of such statements as "the overwhelming effect Swinburne's verse had on [Hardy]", "the value Swinburne had for Pound is more elusive", "the sea in his [Swinburne's] poems is a dissolving chaos, a desolation that will disperse the galvanic twitches of individual existence" (whatever the last phrase may mean).

As to the Swinburne-Pound relationship, in spite of its "more elusive" nature, Davis observes: "Pound's early verse is drenched with few Swinburnian preciousnesses... Pound's persistent love of glitter, of bright, gleaming, fleeting surfaces... is presaged in Swinburne's verse, which is full of gleams and bright half-glimpsed forms." But a

my book, *Re-educating Chinese Anti-Communists* (May 21).

With regard to the prison at Fushun (not Fushan), Amnesty International, in its probing, had certainly come to hear of it. A quick reference to the index of its *Report* under Penal Institutions leads to two separate mentions. A principal

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better critic and a more authoritative practitioner of verse, while discussing Pound's use of *vers libre* and quantitative measure, had this to say about Pound's early verse: "Such a 'freedom' as this lays so heavy a burden upon every word in a line that it becomes impossible to write like Shelley, leaving blanks for those adjectives or like Swinburne, whose adjectives are practically blanks" (T. S. Eliot). That for Davis it is not difficult to imagine "The Thracian ships and the foreign faces" as a line from *The Cantos* says very little about Swinburne, or about *The Cantos*, or about Davis's ability to appreciate the two.

G. SINGH,
Department of Italian Language
and Literature, The Queen's
University, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Anti-Communists in China

Sir, - I request the opportunity to bring to the attention of your readers several factual shortcomings in Dennis Duncanson's comments about

Source of Amnesty's information was Duan Kewen's New York newspaper articles, a fact to which I draw attention on p 50. Incidentally, not all the prisoners I interviewed had been to Fushun, and not all were retained until 1975.

I am accused of not giving the Chinese term for "re-education", and when the reviewer produces it instead this would appear to discredit my work for those who have not read it. Those who have read the book will know that the concept of reform through labour is discussed and the Chinese term *laodong gaizao* (Pinyin spelling) is explicitly given in several places (see, for example, pp 4, 73, 81). The Chinese characters appear in the glossary (p 112).

As for the "two or three of his interviewees now living in Hong Kong, [who] are unregenerate", I interviewed only one Hong Kong resident; and he came across as no less sympathetic to his former captors than those who had chosen to remain in China.

Your reviewer's belief that to spend half one's adult life in prison must break the spirit is one that I once shared. But a belief is not necessarily fact and ought not to be asserted as such. That the men I interviewed appeared not to be broken in spirit is something I thought important enough to record and examine.

J. A. FRYFIELD,
Faculty of Education, Monash
University, Clayton, Victoria,
Australia 3168.

Information, please

Edward FitzGerald, translator of the *Rubáiyat of Omar Khayyám*: manuscripts, unpublished letters, or other information sought; for a biography to be published jointly by Faber & Faber and Atheneum. Robert Bernard Martin, 8 Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HG.

"English Mediaeval Architects: a Biographical Dictionary down to 1550" by John Harvey (1954); any corrections or suggested additions, with fullest possible reference to sources; for a revised edition. Material should be sent direct to Dr Harvey at 32 Christ Church Street East, Frome, Somerset BA11 1GH, by August 31.

Hugh Tinker's books include *The Ordeal of Love*; C. F. Andrews and India, 1980.

Andrew Topsfield's *Paintings from Rajasthan in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne* was published in 1980.

M. E. YAPP's *Strategies of British India: Britain, Iran and Afghanistan 1798-1850* was published in 1980.

824 RN Air Squadron: gifts or loan of documentary material (squadron diaries, line books, photographs etc) sought by the Fleet Air Arm Museum; also reminiscences or anecdotes for a projected history. L. C. N. Gray, Society of Friends of the Fleet Air Arm Museum, Royal Naval Air Station, Yeovilton, Somerset.

Jane Ellen Harrison (1850-1928), classical scholar: any information, correspondence, or whereabouts of living relatives; for a projected biography. Annabel Robinson, 117 Manchester Road, Wilmot, Cheshire SK9 2JH.

Elliot Paul, author of *A Narrow Street* (1942; US title, *The Last Time I Saw Paris*): any information, especially screen-naming, title of films made, about the young French actress Hyacinthe Dunaire in this book. David Gumbel, Lawnwood, Dainead, Portsmouth PO7 6RP.

Haigography

Sir, - After reading the response of Laura (Riding) Jackson (Letters, July 16) to the Anthony Burgess review of the book on Robert Graves (May 21), I feel a mystery has been solved. It was Laura (Riding) Jackson who was writing the speeches for our late Secretary of State, Alexander Haig.

H. K. FLEMING,
Se-Val Apts, M-1, R R 3, Box 194, De Land, Florida 32720.

Edward Garnett

Sir, - Karl Beckson (Letters, July 16) draws attention to the relationship of Edward Garnett to the Rhymers Club and says that he is not mentioned in any letters or memoirs as having been present at a meeting of the Club. One such mention has in fact now come to light, in a hitherto unpublished letter to John Lane, postmarked June 23, 1891. Years later Garnett was among the regular "Rhymers" who are now a London. The other London members he gives as Greene, Radford, Symons, Davidson, Le Gallienne, Johnson, Dowson, Todhunter and Ellis. The summer of 1891 was relatively early in the Club's history and it seems likely that Garnett later drifted away for the reasons that Professor Beckson states. Year's letter to Lane will appear in Volume I of *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats* shortly to be published by Oxford University Press.

JOHN KELLY,
St John's College, Oxford.

Language in England

Sir, - In her review of Hans Aarsleff's *From Lucke to Saussure* (July 9), Rebecca Posner referred to one of Professor Aarsleff's earlier works, *The Study of Language in England 1780-1860*, first published in 1961 and now long out of print.

Your readers may be interested to know that, later this year, The Athlone Press is to publish a paperback edition of this renowned work.

BRIAN SOUTHAM,
Athlone Press, 90-91 Great Russell Street, London WC1.

We regret that in the publication details preceding Nicholas Gray's review of *Bernard Shaw: Early Years, Play Manuscripts in Facsimile*, published in our July 16 issue, the name of Norma Jenckes, the editor of *Athlone the Man*, was incorrectly spelled.

The rise of Rome's historian

W. B. Carnochan

PATRICIA CRADDOCK
Young Edward Gibbon: Gentleman of Letters
380pp, Johns Hopkins University Press, £18.75.
0 8018 2714 0

Was Edward Gibbon ever young? Not only young, according to Patricia Craddock, but more than ordinarily damaged by the experience. At least, that is what her dust-jacket claims: Gibbon was "scarred by painful and destructive childhood experiences"; he had a "struggle" choosing between being a gentleman or being a scholar. If some part of the mind assents to these propositions, another part resists. Gibbon should have been scarred by his childhood. Sickly, awkward, out of place at school, he was the only one of his parents' seven children who survived infancy; his mother died when he was young; and his father, both autistic and capricious, made his life intermittently miserable. Yet Gibbon shows few signs of suffering. If it was a struggle for him to find his vocation, it was a quiet one. He never did quite decide how to merge the gentleman with the scholar; the tension between the two roles survives even in the drafts of the autobiography he tried unsuccessfully to finish when *The Decline and Fall* was done. Yet the inner contest was waged so smoothly it hardly seems a struggle at all.

Gibbon made a point of making the best of things, whether it was the inelegant domesticity of the Pavillard home in Lausanne, where his father sent him to recover from the Catholicism he had contracted as a young student at Oxford; or his father's peremptory order that he give up Suzanne Churchod; or the pain and indignity of his last brief illness. However trying the circumstances, Gibbon complained very little. His scars are not easy to see.

The hydrocele in his testicles that eventually brought on his death makes a nice psychobiographical emblem. He was patient, to the point of self-deception. He endured the hydrocele, even cherished it, for over thirty years. It grew larger and larger (taking on a later almost mythical character in medical folklore), and it became obvious to others. Yet Gibbon partly deceived himself into thinking no one knew. Only partly, however, for when he finally had to write of it to his friend Lord Sheffield, he made evident that he knew that others did know: "Have you never observed through my inexpressible a large prominence circa genitalia?" When at last he had to go to the surgeon, he is said to have posed a self-referential riddle: Why is a fat man like a Cornish Borough? The answer (of course) because he never sees his member. The story might even be true. The great weight that Gibbon put on his small body became a cover enabling him not to see what others could see well enough. It protected him from struggle and from suffering.

And, in fact, the Gibbon of Craddock's text, as distinct from the Gibbon of her dust-jacket, resists the claim that he suffered much. This is partly because Gibbon as an autobiographer wedges himself into the space between his biographer and the young man he once was. A small but representative case in point is the cold gaze of an uncomprehending public. "I am frustrated and heartless at the age of thirty, he completed a draft of the first book of that project, showed it to an approving David Hume, and submitted it to a 'literary society of foreigners' in London - who did not approve. As he tells the story at a distance of more than twenty years, Gibbon listened to the society discussing the work without his being known as its author. What he heard were the 'free strictures and unfavourable sentences of my judges'.

Above all, how did he set up the situation in the first place? But the autobiographer cuts off guesswork at the moment when guesswork seems most necessary. The momentary sensation was painful; but their condemnation was ratified by my

cooler thoughts...." Craddock's comment must be a considerable understatement. "Yes, but Gibbon called the tune. The young Edward Gibbon turns out to be too much an invention of the older Edward Gibbon, and his biographer, who does not take many risks, finds herself having to tinker with that invention. This accounts for some feelings of frustration both in the biography and in the reading of it, feelings reflected here in Craddock's disconsolate catalogue of things we do now know:

We do not know whether he listened "without observation" by playing the role of a disinterested hearer or by sitting behind a door or screen; we do not know how the manuscript was introduced to the group, or by whom. We cannot guess what tone their strictures were delivered in, and whether they expressed merely objections or contempt, whether they condemned the substance, the style, or both.

To this catalogue of frustration should be added the fact that we know nothing about the "society of foreigners" to which Gibbon submitted his manuscript. As an autobiographer Gibbon characteristically tries enough to suggest activity, even turbulence, beneath the surface but not enough for us to know or to make a very good guess about what is happening. He has made matters difficult, that is, for any biographer.

Professor Craddock makes matters even more difficult for herself by a native reticence that throws yet more doubt on the image of Gibbon suffering and struggling. Gibbon makes one statement that we know to

be false in his account of the manuscript history of *Swiss Liberty*: "I delivered my imperfect sheets to the flames." Since he did not do such thing, we might expect the biographer to make the most of the psychological situation. Yet Craddock reconstructs it in the most gingerly way: "his trick of memory if it has any significance, is likely to have the usual defensive value, protecting his conscious mind from discomfort it preferred not to re-experience." Can the trick of memory, if it is a trick of memory rather than a wilful invention, have no significance? Gibbon's biographer seems to have caught the affliction of his defensive habits. She arms herself with the self-protective weaponry of "likely to", of "probably" and "perhaps", remarking on Gibbon's next project (the *Mémoires Littéraires de la Grande Bretagne*): "It was probably a relief, perhaps a great relief, to take on... the further shelter... of anonymity." Between the extremes of risk and caution, Craddock prefers to err on the side of caution; young Edward Gibbon does not emerge in sharp focus.

Professor Craddock's caution also circumscribes her outlook. Whatever facts are to be known about Gibbon before he became historian of the Roman Empire, she recounts in admirable detail. If the material is anywhere to be found, in library or archive or parish register, she has found it. To that extent, this biography is quite indispensable. But the reader sometimes yearns for something more or something different. Another simple case in point: in 1772, Gibbon bought himself a house in London at No 7 Bentinck Street, but Craddock provides no local geography or local

colour. We learn that the house was eleven years old when Gibbon bought it, that he decorated it "according to his own taste", that "it was regarded by him with great pride and affection", that he was pleased with the blue wallpaper for the library. True, but what might be said generally of Gibbon's taste? What ought we to know about his new neighbourhood? Accessible detail, here and elsewhere, is made to do the more arduous work of description, speculation, reconstruction.

This caution also impedes the account of how young Edward Gibbon became historian of the Roman Empire, and that, after all, is the main business. As to Gibbon's famous story that he conceived the idea of writing *The Decline and Fall* amidst the ruins of the Capitol, Craddock claims disbelief that he could have "lied" about so important a matter. Then she backs off: "we cannot know whether the famous scene is historically or only mythically true." Then she asserts her "own opinion" - that the incident "really happened". Then she backs off again: "we must in some sense respect his judgment of its symbolic importance: Rome, twilight, ruins, and ruins in some sense caused the *Decline and Fall*." "In some sense" and, again, "in some sense". The missed opportunity here is to show how, in a cultural sense, Rome, twilight, ruins, and ruins did in fact bring about the *Decline and Fall*. The age was intoxicated by ruin, and Gibbon reinforced, indeed helped to create, the spirit of the times. As a chronicle of ruin, the *Decline and Fall* was the very book the times required. But Craddock keeps her eye, too resolutely here, on her biographical subject.

But it would be churlish to complain too loudly about missed chances when Craddock adds so much to our knowledge of Gibbon. She has found the facts and displayed them usefully. Somewhere, apart from the facts and the public image, there is an Edward Gibbon who may or may not look like his accessible self. There he may suffer and struggle. But in that fastness he lies, perhaps permanently, beyond our reach.

As an ironic meditation on forces contributing to the ruin of the empire, especially Christianity, the *Decline and Fall* was a more private utterance, and something of Gibbon the ironist is also missing from this account. In the autobiography Gibbon remembered three books that "may have remotely contributed to form the historian of the Roman Empire": one was Pascal's *Provincial Letters*; the second, the Abbé de la Bléterie's life of Julian the Apostate; and the third, Giannone's history of Naples. Craddock is good on La Bléterie and Giannone, for the reason that Gibbon kept a record of his readings in both writers. But Pascal gets only passing notice. That is because Gibbon left no comparably specific, datable, evidence for his reading of Pascal. But Pascal was the first of the three he was to remember later on. And it was from the *Provincial Letters*, he said, that "I learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony even on subjects of Ecclesiastical solemnity." Beyond the horizon of datable evidence lies the truth that chronology is not biography. We catch some glimpses - of Gibbon on the way to being an ironist, yet again some chances are missed.

But it would be churlish to complain too loudly about missed chances when Craddock adds so much to our knowledge of Gibbon. She has found the facts and displayed them usefully. Somewhere, apart from the facts and the public image, there is an Edward Gibbon who may or may not look like his accessible self. There he may suffer and struggle. But in that fastness he lies, perhaps permanently, beyond our reach.

An influx of innuendo

David Nokes

WILLIAM T. BETKEN

The Other Shakespeare: The Two Gentlemen of Verona
279pp, Ballantine Publishing and Drama, PO Box 461, Rhinebeck, New York, \$13.95.

The "other" Shakespeare is not some long-lost brother of the dramatist, nor the interpolating hand of Bacon or Marlowe, but William T. Betken. Betken has a passion for Shakespeare. "I love Shakespeare", he announces boldly at the start of his prologue, as though both declaring an interest, and staking a claim in the loved one's works. Just before he declares his "restoration" of Shakespeare by declaring "a veneration, almost rising to idolatry" for his subject. Love may inspire poets but has an unfortunate effect on editors. All's fair in love, and Shakespeare-lovers through the centuries have found an excuse in passion for taking all sorts of liberties with a mistress, whose vulgar expressions and occasional lapses of taste betray origins on the wrong side of the tracks. Like Davenant, Theobald and Tate before him, Betken feels embarrassed when he sees Shakespeare's weaknesses exposed to the cold gaze of an uncomprehending public. "I am frustrated and heartless at the age of thirty, he completed a draft of the first book of that project, showed it to an approving David Hume, and submitted it to a 'literary society of foreigners' in London - who did not approve. As he tells the story at a distance of more than twenty years, Gibbon listened to the society discussing the work without his being known as its author. What he heard were the 'free strictures and unfavourable sentences of my judges'.

And, in fact, the Gibbon of Craddock's text, as distinct from the Gibbon of her dust-jacket, resists the claim that he suffered much. This is partly because Gibbon as an autobiographer wedges himself into the space between his biographer and the young man he once was. A small but representative case in point is the cold gaze of an uncomprehending public. "I am frustrated and heartless at the age of thirty, he completed a draft of the first book of that project, showed it to an approving David Hume, and submitted it to a 'literary society of foreigners' in London - who did not approve. As he tells the story at a distance of more than twenty years, Gibbon listened to the society discussing the work without his being known as its author. What he heard were the 'free strictures and unfavourable sentences of my judges'.

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The *Other Shakespeare* aims to change all this, by giving us the Betken version of the plays, beginning with *Two Gentlemen*. Betken insists that "no attempt has been made to alter or improve Shakespeare". Instead we are offered two parallel texts: Shakespeare's original, and Betken's "translation". With a certain false modesty Betken declares that this translation is "merely the inevitable consequence of a desire to annotate the text fully." I simply carried the process to its logical conclusion, which is to, in effect, make a note on each and every

word of the play, in modern American English. This, incidentally, is a pretty good indication of what modern American English reads and sounds like to Mr Betken.

But this explanation is hardly candid. Actually he has little time for most forms of recent scholarly annotation, which he dismisses in a series of asides, sometimes folksy, sometimes peremptory, as pseudo-intellectual jargon. "Shakespeare is nothing if he is not plain and straightforward", he asserts, with a lover's indignation for those scholars and critics who have trifled with, or slighted, the object of his affections. Eric Partridge (*Shakespeare's Bawdy*) and Helge Kokeritz (*Shakespeare's Pronunciation*) alone are exempted from his scorn, yet even Partridge is described as sometimes "simply wrong". Betken is particularly upset that so many critics, prejudiced by their own judgement, have assumed that *Two Gentlemen* was "an Elizabethan turkey". On the contrary, he argues, we should see it as Shakespeare's "ugly duckling" and love it accordingly.

Betken's real motivation is a simple desire to rewrite Shakespeare, imitation being the sincerest form of flattery. But his translation has few merits, either as an acting text, or as an accurate paraphrase. Betken changes Shakespeare's words, while retaining the blank-verse form of the original. The result is a curious hybrid, neither ancient nor modern, that sees-saws in tone between formal pastiche and colloquial paraphrase. Betken's duckling is a debauched bird, jacked straight from the deep-freeze, and rushed into the microwave oven. Where Shakespeare's Julia protests:

Now, by my modesty, a goodly broker! Dare you presume to harbour wanton To whisper and conspire against my youth?

Betken offers this alternative: "As sure as I am chaste, you are a pander! And do you dare plot in dirty language to plot to undermine my innocence?" (Act I, I)

As with some new translations of the Bible, there is a lingering desire to leave something of the style, movement and "feel" of the authorized

version. The fallacy is to believe that words can be simply detached from the poetic or syntactical forms to which they gave rise. Betken may make sense of some of the obscurities in Shakespeare's vocabulary, but he makes nonsense of his poetry and pedantry of his wit.

Although most recent scholarship on Shakespeare is dismissed as a "cluttering hindrance" to our understanding, there is one area of study that fascinates Betken, and largely determines his approach to the play: the study of Shakespeare's bawdy. "It is incredible... that some of the most common bawdy terms have to this day remained unnoticed." His version of *Two Gentlemen*, which is provocatively styled "the unexpurgated edition" has more double entendres than the "Benny Hill Show". According to Betken, there is scarcely a scene, a speech or a line which would not have caused nudges and winks among the Elizabethans. "Wit" meaning the male or female organ, for example, is, he argues "rife in Elizabethan plays". Put that together with *mind*, "the male organ" and *folly*, "the male or female organ" and we quickly see that all those elaborately witty conceits on the place and praise of folly have a far from Platonic significance. Here are a few more examples from Betken's glossary. *Eye*, "male or female organ (orifice)"; *fruit*, "male or female organ"; *favor*, "male or female organ"; *form*, "male or female organ"; *fortune*, "male or female organ". And so on. It's worth noting that not a single one of these words is recorded in the extensive glossary to Colman's *The Dramatic Use of Bawdy in Shakespeare* (1974), a work which is ignored by Betken. As one reads through this monotonous list, one blinks to find Betken complaining that Partridge is "perhaps overly eager to see bawdy where it does not exist."

What is most depressing about *The Other Shakespeare* is that having unlocked the gate into this garden of delights where every promontory is a penis, every valley a vagina, his text remains as humourless and unironic as a medical dictionary. He promises us an "expurgated" "young person's version" of the play, for use in schools. Yet since nearly every word is now

revealed to have some genital connotation, that expurgated text will surely rival *Dog's Troupe's Hamlet* for brevity.

Johnson's attack on the misguided desire to modernize Shakespeare's language is well known, but bears repetition. Restoring Shakespeare's phrase, "in hugger-mugger" inter him" (rather than the modernized "in private") he wrote:

That the words now replaced are better, I do not undertake to prove: it is sufficient that they are Shakespeare's: if phraseology is to be changed as words grow uncouth by disuse, or gross by vulgarity, the history of every language will be lost; we shall no longer have the words of any author; and, as these alterations will be often unskillfully made, we shall in time have very little of his meaning.

Despite his professions of love, Betken is a mugger, not a hugger. He plunders, rather than cherishes the text, and his rapture concludes in a rape.

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End of an Order

Jonathan Sumption

PETER PARTNER

The Murdered Magicians: The Templars and their Myth
209pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.95.
0 19 215847 3

Twice in its history the papacy has been suppressed in great religious order which was directly dependent upon it and conspicuous for its loyalty. The fourteenth and the eighteenth centuries are the lowest points of the prestige of the papacy since the Dark Ages, and these events were perhaps the most notable symptoms of the fact. In the earlier period Clement V suppressed the Knights Templar; in the later one Clement XIV suppressed the Jesuits. In each case a feeble and vacillating pope, preoccupied with his waning political strength in Italy was brought under intense pressure by secular governments eager to lay hands on the victims' wealth.

The principal difference is that in the eighteenth century the Jesuits were of truly central importance in the religious life of the Catholic Church, and their suppression left a gap which had to be filled forty years later by their restoration. The Templars left no gap. Their *raison d'être* had for two centuries been the defence of the Holy Land, to which cause they had contributed suicidal courage and gross political and strategic misjudgment in about equal proportions. Even this role ceased when Acre fell in 1291, the last Christian city of Outremer.

This event left the Order extremely vulnerable in Europe. It had made many enemies, not only among the varied and numerous anti-clerical agitators to be found in most European countries but also in the ecclesiastical

hierarchy, from whose jurisdiction the Order was exempt and for whose privileges they showed scant respect. These critics were silenced, if at all, only by the belief that the Templars were essential to the defence of the Holy Land. After 1291 the Templars were tempting victims, without friends and with assets which were huge in relation to their small numbers.

In the early hours of October 13, 1307, all the Templars of France were arrested without warning by officers of the king, Philip the Fair. It was a feat of organization which could scarcely be bettered by a modern totalitarian dictatorship. The same comparison is suggested by the brutality which followed. In a combination of psychological pressure and physical torture which produced a mass of confessions admitting in more or less stereotyped terms to sodomy, a variety of magical practices and the ritual renunciation of Christ in favour of graven idols. By the law of the Church a confessed heretic who sought to withdraw his confession was treated as incorrigible, and was liable to be sentenced to death. Fifty-four Templars who tried to do so were burned outside the walls of Paris in May 1310. In March 1312, the bull *Vox in Exilium* formally suppressed the Order. Two years later its principal officers followed to the stake, protesting their innocence as they went.

The liberal instincts of nineteenth-century historians made them hostile to privileged clerical corporations, and most agreed with Michelet that the Templars had it coming to them. Twentieth-century historians have taken a different view. Writing with an eye to the persecutions of their own totalitarian age they have shown rather more sympathy for the victims of the fourteenth-century version. Both are historical points of view as Peter Partner has no difficulty in demonstrating in this book, which is

not a history but an excellent argumentative discussion of the last days of the Templars, often original and always fascinating even (perhaps especially) when it is wrong.

Dr Partner's principal purpose is to explode the generally held view that the suppression of the Templars was the work of a cynical despot extracting confessions which he knew would appeal to the credulity of his subjects, to justify a crude act of confiscation.

In the event he proves rather less than he argues. It is undoubtedly true that the early fourteenth century was an anxious and unstable period in which the fear of magical conspiracies and secret societies was a very real one. It is also probable although by no means certain that Philip the Fair and his chief minister Guillaume de Nogaret truly believed that the Templars were guilty of at least some of the crimes attributed to them. What little we know about this taciturn statue of a king suggests a man of unadventurous piety who is likely to have shared most of the superstitions of his subjects. It is fair to add that he

was generously endowed with a quality essential to all successful despots, the capacity to be persuaded by his own propaganda. Historically this is all that has saved such men from the imputation of cynicism.

Partner is on less strong ground when he comes to the actual charges against the Templars. What he suggests (without actually saying so) is that while the charges were exaggerated, there is no smoke without fire. He points out quite correctly that the fact that a confession is extorted by violence does not mean that it is all false. He is less willing to recognize that the fact that Philip the Fair and his chief minister probably believed the confessions does not mean that anything in them was true. There is simply no evidence on the point one way or the other.

On the essential points the Templar confessions are suspiciously similar, faithful reflections of what the inquisitors set out to prove. On less important points there are some differences, differences of the kind

which a frightened prisoner will think up for himself and readily volunteer to placate his questioner. The evidence of the investigations in France was not corroborated by those which occurred in other countries except, significantly, those countries like the kingdom of Naples which were satellites of France. Nor was Philip's evidence accepted by most of the Council of Vienna, whose suggestion that the Templars should be allowed to defend themselves had to be peremptorily silenced by the Pope under threat of excommunication. As evidence of the methods of Philip the Fair's government these confessions are of some interest; as evidence of the conduct and beliefs of the Templars they are worthless.

We may safely assume that the Templars, like most communities of males, had problems about homosexuality, but with that exception there is virtually nothing which supports what was said against them. They were not accused of cupidity, arrogance and incompetence, although those would have been the only unanswerable charges.

some girls; at the same time, Gilles spared the boys with the best singing voices, and kept them for his choir.

Gilles gradually destroyed himself. He was a failure as a soldier, as an alchemist, as a magician, as an inveterate of the devil. He spent his substance wildly, selling property after property to meet the heavy costs of maintaining a gorgeously dressed army, a large household of pages, clerics and panderers who scoured the villages for him picking up likely children for his master. The end, when it came, was swift and humiliating. Reliquet completes his portrait of this "born loser", with his almost pathological drive to self-destruction, with a innovative and valuable third section entitled "Des forces obscures". This contains chapters on the peculiar position of children in the Middle Ages and their crude exploitation, so that Gilles' sadistic court and all its glamorous attractions for poor and good-looking boys are seen as part of a general pattern of a broadly accepted attitude to young people which today seems almost beyond belief.

The final chapter, "Eros and Thanatos", presents an explanation of Gilles' sexual mania by relating it to the practices of the times in which he lived. There is an interesting allusion to Le Roy Ladurie's marvellous *Montaigne*, and to the novels of Michel Tournier, in particular *Le Roi des Aulnes*, that terrifying evocation of a bloodthirsty sexual monster, in which the hero is named after one of Rais' castles, Abel Tiffauges.

The seduction, corruption, exploitation and ritual murder of youth is only one aspect of the medieval quality of modern life, and Reliquet makes several recent mass homosexual murders in the US, though he fails to record similar horrors in Africa, Europe and Britain. He equates the sexual abuse of the young, weak and innocent with totalitarian practices, invoking the names of tyrants like Hitler and Bokassa. He also makes interesting comparisons with the cinema, giving numerous examples of the self-destructive drive in films by John Huston, Anthony Mann and particularly Fritz Lang, who was himself a truly Dostoevskian loser. His book is likely to be the authoritative work on Gilles de Rais for many years to come. And it is curiously topical.

Profession, Vocation, and Culture in Later Medieval England, a volume of essays dedicated to the memory of A. R. Myers, who died in 1980, has recently appeared under the editorship of Cecil H. Clough (200pp. Liverpool University Press, 1982, 0.85/23 324 1). Clough himself provides an introductory essay on "The profession and society", and the volume also includes contributions by Richard G. Davies on "The papacy" by R. L. Storey on "Clerical man-bureaucrats" and by Jennifer Kermode on "The medieval church". Three northern English writers

INDIA

Before the British

V. G. Kiernan

TAPAN RAYCHAUDHURI and IFRAN HABIB (Editors)

The Cambridge Economic History of India: Volume 1, c1200-c1750
543pp. Cambridge University Press.
£42.50.
0 521 22692 9

Cambridge has for long been a bountiful provider of large surveys, series of volumes on the history of particular parts of the world or on particular aspects of their history. It is a service more and more valuable as we struggle to chart the new continents of knowledge gradually rising out of the ocean of ignorance. The distinguished editors of this first part of a new series have set themselves, as their preface explains, a double aim: a statement of what is now known and "initiation of enquiry into areas which still await research in any depth".

Chapters remain "large and numerous". The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have come to be better understood than any before, or the time immediately after. Northern India is better known than southern. Little study has been made so far of regional economies; hence the subject here is India as a whole, though there are separate chapters on the south and sections on the Deccan and Assam.

Of the fifteen chapters, Irfan Habib contributes three, including a helpful one on the geographical setting, and parts of three others; Tapan Raychaudhuri has written one, and parts of two others. This gives the work more unity, but its writers are a very cosmopolitan team, contrasting with the essentially British authorship of the old *Cambridge History of India*: times have altered greatly between these two

undertakings. Besides four other Indian scholars there are three Westerners, a Russian, and a Japanese. They do not always see eye to eye on important issues. This is inevitable in view of the frequent paucity of evidence, which several contributors feelingly lament. It is still necessary to rely on accounts of India by European visitors, though Indian students have long been wary of bias or incomprehension in them, and in the writings of British historians of the old school. It is agreeable to find that W. H. Moreland, the pioneer of Indian economic history, is often cited, more often than not with approval, although he is censured for a "highly ethnocentric view" of some aspects of Indian social life. Habib, in a chapter on population in the Mughal era, also criticizes Moreland's long-accepted estimate of 100 million in 1600, and raises the figure to 142 million.

Evidence about pre-Muslim medieval economic history is "exceedingly fragmentary and difficult to interpret". India's subjugation by newcomers from the north, Turkish and Persian, had antithetical consequences. It brought a number of useful new techniques, among them paper-making and the use of the spinning-wheel. On the other hand its early stages meant much ravaging and looting, and campaigns and punitive expeditions were largely slave-raids on a grand scale; the captives might be required to learn the new crafts introduced by their masters. Beyond this, conditions under the Sultanate of Delhi are still very imperfectly known. It is otherwise with its successor, the Mughal empire, and the span from about 1500 to 1750 occupies ten out of the fifteen chapters: here an impressive quantity of information is collected, and lucidly arranged.

Uncertain as agrarian relations under the Sultanate are, graphic details have survived of the draconian measures, including imprisonment and torture, by dint of which 'Ala-uddin Khalji imposed the land-tax which remained the basis of Indian revenue until a century ago. Official auditing showed continually at its most persistent; in Mughal times the usual penalty for failure to pay was "imprisonment and torture of the head and feet male population and enslavement of women and children". Revenue demand was being pushed up to something like half the gross agricultural product, in order to support the military-bureaucratic machine and keep its foreign elite in fabulous luxury. In 1647 it is reckoned that three-fifths of the land-tax went to 445 mansabdars, or holders of benefices, about a quarter of the amount as their personal income.

Raychaudhuri maintains, all the same, that the government was not "a mere incubus sucking the lifeblood of the peasantry"; rulers recognized a duty to give protection to the village. But it does not appear that they gave or could give much. "The predominantly one-way flow of commodities from the villages to towns" was surely due less to "rural self-sufficiency" than to rural poverty: after parting with half his crop the average cultivator had nothing left to buy town wares with. Raychaudhuri falls back on "one very positive feature of the empire", law and order – the same justification always claimed by the British, and with much better warrant, when reproached with their grinding taxation.

There was indeed much inter-regional trade, in bulk commodities like cloth and foodstuffs as well as luxuries, in spite of the heavy cost of transport by land. It is undeniable that the Mughals minted "one of the finest

coined currencies in the contemporary world", and their era "appears to have been a veritable golden age of urbanization". But while this work does full justice to all such developments, and the notion of an India sunk in torpid immobility is effectively banished, there is little to favour the contention put forward in recent years that the country was moving towards a decisive advance, which British conquest cut short. In the chapter on industry Raychaudhuri points out that technology was backward by comparison with that of China and western Europe; huge buildings were constructed without benefit even of wheelbarrows; watermills and windmills, long in use in both Persia and China, were neglected.

It is very doubtful therefore whether manufactures "had developed tendencies likely to lead to positive long-term changes". Minerals were a weak point. India mined plenty of iron, but its furnaces could not reach the temperature required for making good cast-iron. Production by and large, though "certainly not stagnant", remained "narrow, undiversified and traditional". In south India, L. Aluv writes,

merchant capital often gained control over craftsmen, but it was not really evolving into industrial capital; newer features were too closely "interwoven with pre-capitalist ones".

Burton Stein's description of the great southern "war-state" of Vijayanagar forms one of the most fascinating though complicated chapters. Vijayanagar built itself up by attacking Hindu kingdoms further south, not, as often supposed, to provide a bulwark for Hinduism against the Muslim threat; but as time went on its main conflicts were with the neighbouring Muslim states which finally destroyed it. Logically enough, Brahmans came into prominence as governors or commanders, and temples acquired large estates; in southern India they were focal points of urban growth. Like religion, irrigation is another recurrent theme throughout the volume; there is not much here to support the "hydraulic theory" of the Asian state. The final chapter is on living standards. Human progress is hard to measure; but it is not encouraging to learn from Satish Chandra that the purchasing power of a poor man's wages may have been much the same in 1961 as in 1595.

Goings-on in Goa

C. R. Boxer

JOHN CORREIA-ALFONSO (Editor)

Indo-Portuguese History: Sources and Problems
201pp. Oxford University Press.
£7.75.
0 19 561261 2

M. N. PEARSON

Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records
149pp. New Delhi: Concept.
Rupees 60.

Indo-Portuguese History contains a selection of the papers presented to an International Seminar held at Goa in November 1978, with the support of various learned institutions and of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Father John Correia-Alfonso was a prime mover – in some ways the *fons et origo* – of this meeting, over which he presided. The results certainly justified his oft-reiterated conviction that Indo-Portuguese historical sources are a mine whose surface has scarcely been scratched, and that its riches can be employed for a fuller study of those social, economic and cultural aspects of life with which history is increasingly concerned.

One group of papers surveys the primary and secondary sources for Indo-Portuguese history, providing a valuable introduction to the wealth of archival material at Lisbon, Goa and Rome, including the voluminous Jesuit *Relações*. Another group of papers discusses the value of the Portuguese sources on India from a variety of angles. Genevieve Bouchon, an Indologist who is also steeped in the sixteenth-century Portuguese records and chronicles, reminds us that many of these were written by men who had lived in India for many years, and who wrote at a turning-point in the history of the sub-continent. Similarly, Luis Filipe Thomaz emphasizes that the Portuguese discovered India, and the rulers of the south-east Asian archipelago, and the Indian Ocean region is relatively abundant and on the whole reliable for the early sixteenth century. He thus complements the work of

of course, these sources have their lacunae, biases and defects, as do all historical records. Some of these drawbacks are acutely analysed by Ahin Das Gupta in his paper "Some problems of reconstructing the history of India's West Coast from European sources".

Inevitably, publication of *Indo-Portuguese History* came too late for it to be consulted by the contributors to the recent *Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol 1 c 1200-1750. But future historians of sixteenth to eighteenth-century India will ignore it at their peril.

A very useful complement to Correia-Alfonso's volume will be found in M. N. Pearson's *Coastal Western India*. This comprises seven stimulating and well-documented historical essays, five of which were previously published elsewhere but are difficult of access. Among the topics covered are a survey of the Goa archives and their relevance for Indian history, as well as for Indo-Portuguese history; a functional analysis of "corruption and corsairs" in sixteenth-century coastal Western India; the role of Goa as a port-city in the sixteenth century; the roles of Baniyas and Brahmans in the Indo-Portuguese economy; and an acute analysis of Indian seafarers in the sixteenth century. A valuable appendix gives details of seventy-seven *Cartas* (seapasses, navicerts) granted by the Portuguese in 1618-22. The recipients included the Great Moghul, Jahangir, and his mother; and the rulers of Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, and "Calcutta". Pearson does not identify this last place; but it was the petty Arabian Sheikhdom of Olsin, just south of Cape Ras Fakat.

Rulers and Residents

Kenneth Ballhatchet

IAN COPLAND

The British Raj and the Indian Princes: Paramountcy in Western India, 1857-1930
345pp. Sangam. Available from Publications India, 112 Whitfield Street, London W1M 6JD. £5.95.

Over 600 princes and princelings managed to survive throughout the period of British rule in India, although not for very long after it. Over 300 of them were in western India, but their principalities tended to be on the small side. The size of Baroda, the largest, was only 8,000 square miles, less than one-tenth that of Hyderabad, and there were many Lilliputs of one or two square miles. This characteristic helps to explain why so many quarrels and scandals enlivened the history of their relations with the paramount power. Unlike the government of India, which dealt with princely states of great size and political importance, the Bombay government showed little restraint in its dealings with the princes of western India. Impatient Residents seemed to be forever urging reforms upon reluctant rulers.

There were political officers who seemed incapable of coping with the complexities of the princes' family disputes. In 1876 some kinsmen of the ruler of Katsana filed a claim to a share in his revenues. It took forty years for successive Political Agents to decide the matter. Their incompetence was only brought to light in 1917, when an appeal against the final decision was made to the government of India. On that occasion a minute was grudgingly recorded in the secretariat to the effect that the delay was in no way attributable to the suitors but solely to Bombay's political officers.

Another source of tension was that these officers knew that they were paid less and had fewer opportunities for promotion than their counterparts under the government of India. In these circumstances generosity from Indian princes was sometimes difficult to resist, and rumours of corruption were impossible to silence. Arthur Travers Crawford, for instance, was accepting loans from rulers within his jurisdiction, but it was generally believed that he had extorted them, and that he was not alone. Nevertheless, Bombay's political officers were indefatigable in their criticisms of incompetence and corruption in the territories under their jurisdiction. The second half of the nineteenth century was the time when Western-style reforms were most energetically urged upon the princes. Their thrones had been guaranteed to them by a royal proclamation after the loyalty which most of them had shown during the Mutiny of 1857, but the

political officers – and the Bombay government – saw that as no reason for allowing them to impede the march of progress. A difficulty was that from some reforms, such as abolishing forced labour or painful punishments, the princes could see no advantage to themselves, while from other reforms, such as abolishing local coinage and tariffs, they could see only advantage to British interests. Persuading them to change their ways stretched the patience of political officers to breaking-point.

But the succession of a minor to a throne presented opportunities which a reforming Resident seldom failed to exploit. This tactic was keenly resented, and the Maharaja of Gwalior drew up a memorandum about it in 1915. His protest was well received. But when the Maharaja had come to see the princes as bulwarks against nationalism, Principally help in the First World War was an additional consideration in their favour. After tortuous bureaucratic wrangling the princes of western India were transferred to the more tolerant supervision of the central government. This was part of a general policy of holding the princes on a looser rein. It has recently been argued that by allowing them to decay or avoid modernization the British sought them to eventual extinction. But such modernization as the British themselves achieved or tolerated in the area under their direct rule did not seem to prolong their own power. Indeed, the nationalist movement remained of negligible importance in the princely states until the end of the British Raj. When that end came, the British government understood very well that it could not be expected to protect the princes or any other groups who were no longer able to serve Britain's present or future interests. In those days at least, a clear perception of political and strategic realities prevailed in Whitehall and Downing Street.

Ian Copland's *The British Raj and the Indian Princes* is based on detailed research in British and Indian archives, and his analysis has implications which could be pondered by politicians as well as by scholars.

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Sublimely secluding

Andrew Motion

MICHAEL ARIS (Editor)

Views of Medieval Bhutan: The Diary and Drawings of Samuel Davis, 1783

122pp, with 62 black-and-white illustrations and 13 colour plates. Serindia Publications, 10 Parkfields, Putney, London SW15 6NH. £18. 0 906026 10 5

Views of Medieval Bhutan actually consists of views of late eighteenth-century Bhutan. Michael Aris's title annoyingly misrepresents his book which is devoted to the career and work of the colonial administrator and artist Samuel Davis. Aris's justification is that Davis's "value judgements... are close to those he might have expressed had he found himself transported back into our own medieval past".

But in fact the style of the paintings is typically Romantic, and Davis judging by the evidence of his Diary - was tolerant and broadminded to the point of being enlightened. Title apart, though, Aris's labours to promote Davis are of enormous value. They provide the first extensive collection of Davis's work in book form, outline the course of an interesting and largely forgotten life, and so restore to us a man of great charm and an artist of comparable talent.

If Davis is at all generally known these days, it is probably as the friend of - and collaborator with - the two great English painters who worked in India before the Raj - Thomas and William Daniell. When the Daniells completed their first large project - the

views of Calcutta - in 1788, it was Davis who encouraged them to visit the foothills of the Himalayas, and who was later their host for nearly a year at Bhagulpur. It is likely, too, that he influenced their choice of several important subjects. As the author of an article "On the Astronomical Computations of the Hindus", Davis did a great deal to increase British interest in Indian astronomy, and it is likely that he encouraged the Daniells to make their wonderful drawings of the Janta Manta (the Observatory) in Delhi. The Janta Manta's extraordinary group of huge scooped-out spheres and massive triangular observation posts catered for a Romantic predilection for the marvellous, while also obviously suggesting themselves as material for a documentary survey.

Davis's career and taste led him to fulfil the same dual purpose in his own paintings. He was born in 1760, in the West Indies, and reached India in 1780. Three years later, as a lieutenant in the Bengal Army, he was appointed by Warren Hastings to accompany Samuel Turner's mission to Bhutan and Tibet as a surveyor. Later in his life, first as Assistant Collector of Bhagalpur and finally as Accountant-General of India, art was forced to give way to administration. But in Bhutan it had a sanctioned pre-eminence. Turner's expedition to Bhutan was in fact the third that the East India Company had sent, and like its predecessors (one led by George Bogle and the other by Alexander Hamilton) its intentions were partly diplomatic, partly commercial and partly simply investigative. When the mission reached the Tibet border, however, Davis was thwarted. Representatives of the infant Panchen Lama insisted that this third visitation should include



A Manathi barber and customer, from Victorian India in Focus: a selection of early photographs from the collection in the India Office Library and Records by Ray Desmond (100pp. HMSO. £9.95. 0 11 580227 4).

no more men than had been on the second, and Davis was allowed no further.

But he energetically made the most of his disappointment, as Aris allows us to appreciate. The book's sixty-two reproductions, thirteen of which are in colour, occasionally compare the quality and technique of Davis's work to the Daniells', and while he never quite matches their standard, he is always excitingly scrupulous, and sympathetically impressed by what was and is an engrossingly beautiful country. Aris has had the good idea, too, of printing extracts from contemporary accounts by each plate, and Turner's own response to the landscape is a particularly good complement to Davis's.

To such as find satisfaction in contemplating nature, in its most gigantic and rudest form, what an

inexhaustible fund of delight is here displayed: Gratification waits on every step, and the beholder, fascinated with the ever-varying beauties, pauses to enjoy the rich repast, insensible of fatigue, and turns his eye with reluctance from so magnificent a prospect.

The general effect of Davis's work illustrates a paradox which is evident in a good many paintings of this kind and period: their sublime grandeur is treated in such a way as to make it seem simultaneously awe-inspiring and seducing. Epic smoking chasms, massive waterfalls, and vast mountain flanks are softened by the washes of watercolour - it is as if a member of the Norwich School had strayed into Xanadu. Similarly, the colossal forts and ingenious bridges - whether painted or drawn - stand as symbols of mortal ingenuity and structure in a

context which might hardly be thought to admit such things. And when people themselves appear (which in terms of actual portraiture is rare) they perform an equivalent function. If they are in local dress, it is often reminiscent of classical costume, and thereby seems to suggest a degree of cultural permanence. If they are simply members of Turner's expedition, their penetration of the place is almost cheekily irrefutable. In one particularly beautiful watercolour with inset details, a figure in a red turban is wheeling a waywiser (a distance-measurer) round a bend in a precipitous mountain path, with a thin catamaran in the yellow distance. It is a stunning image, and much characteristic of Davis's personality: a touchingly demotic confrontation of the pioneeringly human with the ineffably remote.

Nabob's nachlass

Andrew Topsfield

TOBY FALK and MILDRED ARCHER

Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library

559pp. Sotheby Parke Bernet. £57.50. 0 85607 100 2

Although the Victorians gave high praise to the decorative arts of India, the sculpture and painting of the sub-continent were to their eyes grotesque, lacking in science and unworthy of notice. As a result, the study of Indian painting only began in the present century and has been furthered only very gradually by a small band of British, Indian, American and European scholars and amateurs. The greatest advances have been made in the last thirty years, following the dispersal of many of the old princely collections and the corresponding growth of public and private collections in India and the West. Much of value has been published in a selective fashion in exhibition catalogues. Very few scholars, however, have had the time or industry to write the much needed catalogues raisonnés of the major public collections, which in many cases remain imperfectly known even to their curators. The appearance of this handsome and generously illustrated catalogue of the important collection of the India Office Library is therefore all the more welcome. It has been written by Toby Falk in collaboration with Mildred Archer, whose authoritative catalogues of the British drawings, Company and folk paintings in the IOI, are already standard reference works.

The authors have to some extent built on the work of other scholars, for the catalogue has had a long gestation since it was first proposed in 1925. In completing the task of describing the 1,700 pictures, grouping them by regional schools, and providing lucid, helpful introductory essays on their stylistic development, they have performed an immense service to students. Their work will be most indispensable to studies of the Mughal and Deccani schools, especially of their

later phases, in which for historical reasons the IOI collection is so strong.

As the excellent historical introduction makes clear, about two-thirds of the present collection was assembled two hundred years ago by the greatest of the early European collectors, the Company servant and nabob, Richard Johnson. His arrival in Calcutta in 1770 coincided with the earliest age of Indological studies. Rising steadily in the Company service, Johnson entered the circle of Warren Hastings, Sir Elijah Impey, the Sanskritist Charles Wilkins and others. He learned Arabic, Persian, Turki and Hindustani. From the income which, following the usual custom - he made from private trade, he bought large numbers of manuscripts and paintings dispersed by the impoverished Mughal nobility. During periods of residence at the provincial centres of Lucknow and Hyderabad he also patronized artists

working in the local court styles, just before their final decline. His interest as a collector and patron in a wide variety of subject matter (rather than the now fashionable nuances of style) is typical of the inquisitive spirit of the age: Persian literary themes, Hindu deities, Mughal portraits and versions of European themes all attracted him. But his most ardent enthusiasm was for those intriguing productions of local Indian court culture, *ragamala* (*ragas* and *raginis*) are visualized as princes, ladies, gods and ascetics in various conventional, often amorous, situations. The implied - though in fact elusive - relationship between musical theory and painting fascinated both Johnson and the great Indologist Sir William Jones, with whom he associated in the 1780s.

Compelled by poor health to return to England, Johnson became a banker.

Shortly before his death in 1807 financial troubles obliged him to offer his huge collection of paintings and manuscripts to the India Office for 3,000 guineas, a bargain which they fortunately accepted. Since then, nineteenth-century apathy and twentieth-century lack of funds have limited the further growth of the collection; the most important later accession was the purchase in 1908 of the album (recently dismantled by the Library) of portraits, flower studies and calligraphy which the Mughal prince Dara Shikuh had presented to his wife in 1642.

The authors' descriptions of the paintings are thorough and dependable. The discussion notes on the more important works break much new ground, as in the case of the Dara Shikuh album or the famous "Squirrels in a chequer tree", where it is pointed out that the squirrels are of the

European species and probably derive from an imported print. And, subject indexes and concordances of the paintings are provided. Inscriptions on the paintings are usually transliterated in full, though without diacritical marks; errors are mainly trivial (eg *ganangha* for *ganargah*, *Mu'azzim* for *Mu'azzam*). However, the inscription of 514 (a) has been garbled and the name of the Udaipur artist Rama missed. It is an inevitable and hardly a shortcoming of a work of such wide scope that scholars will differ over a few of the attributions and identifications of subjects. In a field of study in which well-documented dilettantism has been more common than rigorous scholarship, this book is a conspicuously solid contribution, and one hopes that the projected companion catalogue of Indian illustrated manuscripts in the IOI will not be as long in the making.

omitted. Here are Halhed and Wilkins, scholars and gentlemen, among the first of the gifted Orientalists; and William Carey, the Baptist who did more for Bengali education than for Evangelism; and J. W. Kaye, who published the open-minded *Calcutta Review*.

One could wish that rather more space had been devoted to the "Tolly" itself and to the other clubs of the city, for their importance in the social and political strategies of the British cannot be over-emphasized. It usually goes unnoticed (and Mr Banerjee, out of delicacy I suspect, does not remark on this) that the vast majority of such places throughout India were not founded until after the Mutiny and began to flourish only after the tide of Indian nationalism was beginning to flow strongly. The Bengal Club, by more than half a century the oldest in India, was the snootiest in Calcutta, was a curiosity in itself, and up as early as 1827. The clutch of foundations which followed the arrival of the Saturday Club in 1880 were a product of larger mentality mixed with prejudice against most natives below the rank of Rajah. They were places where the Brits could discuss their ruling preoccupations in secrecy, where they could say what they

damned well thought of Congress to each other without fear of offending Indian business contacts, of provoking a riot, or of being subsequently outmanoeuvred by a native seceder. Only the Calcutta Club, established in 1907, allowed Indians across its threshold from the outset, a gratifying circumstance which accounts for the Presidential portraits lining its staircase today, alternately white and brown-faced.

British India was based on a notion of hierarchy as befitting as that of Hinduism, and in clubland's order of precedence the "Tolly" came second only to the Bengal Club until that mortifying day many years after Independence when the senior club had to sell up part of their premises, accompanied by a sad auction of furniture, mildewed pictures and other clubbable bric-a-brac. Since then the "Tolly" has regained supremacy as a sylvan enclave some miles away from the worst that Calcutta has to offer. Mr Banerjee and his friends have produced a splendid souvenir that offers not the slightest hint that it has been written by a Bengali rather than an Englishman. Thank you, and what Lord Macaulay was driving towards.

INDIA

MARK JUERGENSEMEYER

Religion as Social Vision: The Movement Against Untouchability in 20th-Century Punjab

357pp. University of California Press. £21. 0 520 04301 4

The religion of the disinherited, of the economically oppressed and the culturally deprived, has long been a subject of interest to students of social institutions in the Western world. In the nineteenth century the German historian Adolf Harnack wrote of Christianity having taken root among people for whom the word "misery" was often only another expression for the word "life": the poor, the thrust aside, the unjustly treated, who had been waiting in patience for the day when their deliverance was to come.

Studies of the religious movements of the poor in medieval Europe, in the Reformation period, and in seventeenth-century England, if they do not confirm, at least make plausible, the sweeping judgment of another great church historian Ernest Troeltsch that the really creative, church-forming, religious movements are the work of the poorest classes in society. His explanation for this was that the presence of "the vehement love of need", coupled with the absence of "an all-relativizing culture of reflection" in the lower strata of society, made possible an unconditioned faith in divine revelation that was denied to the more reflective and more secure upper classes. Out of this lower-class faith came an "intransigence of certitude" that made possible the institution-building achievements of the disenfranchised. It was from such European insights that Richard Jurgensmeyer in the 1920s made his brilliant analysis of the social sources of

Aspirations of the outcastes

Ainslie Embree

denominationalism in the United States. Many of the new sects that proliferated in the nineteenth century had their origins in the desire of groups that were both economically and culturally marginal to American life to transform their situation through creating a new religious identity. Thus the existence of black churches is not due, as is often supposed, to blacks being excluded from white churches, but to the desire of the blacks for what Mark Jurgensmeyer calls in his study of disinherited groups in India "counter structures". Here the marginal and the outcaste found freedom from the rigid social structures that controlled their lives while at the same time indicating a longing to participate in the mainstream of society and tradition.

It is remarkable that these insights from European social history into the distinctive nature of religious movements among the poor have been so little used in the study of Indian culture, which is rich both in the poor and in religiosity. Indian religion has, of course, been the subject of intense scrutiny in the West for the past two hundred years but the emphasis has tended to be on manners and customs, or on the belief systems embodied in the vast scriptural corpus of Hinduism. Where Jurgensmeyer has moved into new territory is through combining the preoccupation of European scholars with the religious movements of the poor and oppressed with the insights and methodologies of American social science. Many of his conclusions will inevitably be disputed but this does not lessen the importance of the book for an understanding of the aspirations of a section of the Indian poor traditionally referred to in Western literature as "Untouchables". Here surely is a group for whom misery and life seem to be interchangeable terms, and Jurgensmeyer's achievement is to

show how what, at least to the outsider, appears to be an undifferentiated oppressed mass, is vibrant with individuality, capable of producing, in Troeltsch's terms, community-building revelations.

The specific people studied by Jurgensmeyer over a ten year period are the Untouchables of Punjab. The British census-takers devised the neutral term "scheduled castes" for these groups because they were listed in schedules, and this is still used in India. Gandhi called them Harijans, the children of God, in what the cynical, including many Untouchables, see as an attempt to lighten a system of oppression with a term drawn from the religious culture that legitimized the oppression. In any case, as Jurgensmeyer points out, the results of untouchability persist, and those to whom birth has given that status share both the social stigmas of untouchability, such as exclusion from normal social intercourse, and the economic oppression of poverty. While there are rich Untouchables, and many who have risen to positions of influence, the lot of the overwhelming majority is a life of unending poverty, made even worse by the attitudes of the higher castes. And yet in this depressing world, which seems without history and without change, there have been movements that promised some hope of deliverance.

While Jurgensmeyer believes that the Untouchables have a religious tradition of their own which differs in fundamental ways from that of normative Hinduism, he acknowledges that they share with caste Hindus many common elements, including deities, festivals, and adherence to customs and values articulated in the pervasive Hindu concept of *dharma*, or social obligation and duty. Beyond these shared elements is what Jurgens-

meyer regards as the central feature of the religious life of the Untouchables: an awesome respect for the vitality of the spirit world, and a conviction that its presence is ubiquitous in special people, natural objects, remarkable events, and potent signs and symbols.

Jurgensmeyer admits that such beliefs can be found in other groups in India, but he insists that the Untouchables have a complete cosmology of the spirit world, and that their religious practices and customs stem from a wholly different religious structure than that of Brahmanical Hinduism. He believes that unlike the notion of reality held by upper caste Hindus, the world of the Untouchables is ethically dualistic, with this world being the real world: the self, the individual, is a participant in the wars waged by the good and evil spirits. Unlike Hinduism, the religion of the Untouchables seeks salvation, not in transcendence or release, but in active participation in this world. Religious movements among the Untouchables, therefore, will involve the vision of a new and better society; and since they understand that their economic and social condition arises from Hindu religious values, this social vision includes a rejection of Hinduism. "We are not Hindus", is a common assertion of the Untouchables.

It was inevitable in 1920s India that any movement distinguished by a desire for social change would become politically active, and in this case action was defined, on the one side, by the Government of India Act of 1919, by which the British made clear their commitment to representation in the legislative assemblies of communal groups and special interests, and on the other by the Indian National Congress, which, claiming to speak for India, denounced such representation. Through focusing on the history of a number of movements in Untouchable

communities in the Punjab, Jurgensmeyer is able to demonstrate that the primordial religious beliefs of the Untouchables influence the social visions of their movements and that this was reflected in the very modern, and alien, exercise of the ballot box.

The movement to which Jurgensmeyer gives the greatest attention is the Ad Dharm, which was founded in 1925 by a group of young Untouchables who had been partially educated and saw the possibility of changing the status of their community. The critical organizational role was played by Mangoo Ram, an able young man who had returned to the Punjab after years of adventure abroad. From the beginning, they saw their task as the creation of a new religion, of which the basic idea was that the Untouchables were a *qum*, a people or "nation", distinct from the Hindus, Muslims, or Sikhs. Ad Dharm means "original religion", and its advocates claimed that the Untouchables were the original people of India, who had been conquered and oppressed by the invading Hindu Aryans. "They destroyed our history," they rewrote our history. So the social vision included "a world turned upside down": the Untouchables would restore their true history and would take their rightful place in the world by being the first, not the last. An important part of this discovery of the past was the role assigned to Ravi Das, a sixteenth-century poet-saint who had long been revered by his fellow Untouchables of North India, yet honoured also by the upper castes. One of his verses sums up why the Ad Dharm leaders used him as a symbol of their new religion:

I, born to be a carrier of curries, am now the lowly one to whom the Brahmins come

And lowly bow.

The Untouchables, who were not

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J. B. S. P. 1946

a people, had become a people and been given a name. That was why Mahatma Gandhi's work on behalf of the Untouchables was rejected by the Ad Dharm. Gandhi offered them a place within Hinduism; but their vision was that of a new heaven and a new earth distinct from Hindu culture, in which they would be a community, a people, in their own right. Their rejection of Gandhi's appeal is part of the reason why they turned to the British for assistance. This inevitably led to the denunciation of the leaders of Ad Dharm as agents of imperialism, although there is no evidence, as the nationalists charged, that they had received money from the Government.

With its message of social equality and its emphasis on individualism and self-help, which at the same time stressing support of the community, Ad Dharm undoubtedly gave many of the Untouchables of the Punjab a new sense of dignity and identity that must have had a lasting effect on individual lives. Because of its numerical strength Government and Congress courted the organization, but the very success of participating in electoral politics weakened the Ad Dharm, and by the eve of Independence it had lost its effectiveness. The movement has been revived in recent years in the somewhat different setting of Wolverhampton by Untouchable immigrants who feel that its vision of equality is relevant in twentieth-century England.

The Ad Dharm was not alone in providing social visions linked to the religion and culture of the Untouchables. Among what Juergensmeyer calls "competing visions" were such groups as the Radhasoamis and the Valsukhi Sabha, both of which, while rooted in the

religious traditions of the Untouchables, offered new concepts of human dignity and social equality. Of a rather different order was the movement led by Dr Ambedkar, who only gradually turned to religious symbols for fulfillment. Juergensmeyer says he rejected Ad Dharm and accepted Buddhism because, while Ad Dharm embodied the egalitarianism he desired, it was separatist in its emphasis on the Untouchables as a unique community, and he wanted a creed that would embrace all Indians. One suspects, however, that it would have been impossible for Ambedkar to join an exciting organization; Buddhism appealed precisely because it had disappeared as an Indian religion. But Juergensmeyer is probably correct when he says that Ambedkar's movement has not gained wide support among the Untouchable communities of the Punjab because it lacked the familiar religious symbols of their culture.

Long before the Ad Dharm or the Neo-Buddhists of Ambedkar had made their appearance in the Punjab another new religion had claimed the allegiance of thousands of Untouchables. This was Christianity, which in the last decades of the nineteenth century seemed about to sweep all the Untouchables into the Church, though not all the Christian missionaries were happy about this; some worried, with good reason, that "by raking rubbish into the church" they would deter higher caste converts. Although Christianity offered a vision of a better social order and the means of attaining it through its church communities, educational institutions, and economic help, the success of the early years waned; unlike other

movements among the Untouchables, Christianity was not rooted in their own culture, and its promise of an ideal social order proved to be one more illusion.

Many Untouchables turned to Marxism, which in so many ways seemed bound to appeal to the Indian oppressed. But there were no large-scale conversions or mass movements towards the Communist Party by the Untouchables in the Punjab, and Juergensmeyer suggests that this is because, apart from organizational problems, a fundamental difference exists between the perceptions of the Marxists and the Untouchables as to the cause of their social and economic condition. The Marxists see the Untouchables as a class, with their degradation rooted in economic oppression by the land-owning class.

All the Untouchable movements which have voiced their grievances, from Ad Dharm to Christianity, have understood that Hinduism, the religion of the upper castes, is the source of their oppression, and the attainment of the social vision of a better life will come when they are freed not only from the economic burdens imposed by the upper castes but from their ideology as well. Since almost all the leaders of the various Community parties in the Punjab are from the upper castes, the comment of one old Untouchable has special meaning. When asked why his people were not Marxists, he could reply without irony, "They are our class enemies."

Religion as Social Vision suggests that the misery and deprivation of India's poor, which strike the foreigner with such obsessive force, may mask new movements of revitalization and of hope.

Postcards from Kodai

Kodalikanal is a hill station in the Western Ghats. More than seven thousand feet high, it was developed as a retreat by the English who frequented it during the summer months when life became unbearably hot on the plains.

Here I am once more. Do you remember the castanets of toads at dusk, thousands of them? The veil, diaphanous, that drifts over the glaze of the five-fingered lake? This will bring it back if anything will. Colonel Edgumbe is here again and sends regards - we two are the last survivors.

Have you ever stood higher than the clouds and watched them smoking, lifting from valleys? This is the eyrie of the Western Ghats. From the verandah of this bungalow I can survey the whole apparent world, everything, my dear, trapped in place or time, hazy or shining. Godlike, powerless!

Down at the Carlton the new head waiter is called Joseph! Is that a requirement for the post? They still fold all the napkins in unexpected ways and trick them out with wildflowers. A log fire in the grate and, outside, the cool air close with pine-smoke, the improving smell of eucalyptus (only this would seem the least out of place in an Alpine resort). Dear old Kodai! There are changes here, but not as elsewhere.

You'd laugh, Emily. The Carlton Hotel - I went there for tea with Colonel Edgumbe - still has the books we combed through as children: *Just Patty*, *True Tilda* and *Bawbee Jack*. Does that ring a bell or two? They're wrapped now in parcel paper, and kept behind glass. As if they were quite irreplaceable.

Big changes in the air at the golf club! A 'high water rise tank and sump' have been installed; they mean to replace all the browns with greens. What was good enough for us... But no, they must always go one better. It all seems a dreadful waste of money. Are these the highest golf links anywhere? I asked the new secretary but he does not know. Typical! Hope this card gets through!

Light is a generous discoverer. Like God, it finds itself. The sleeping lake wakes, stretches, slips into its newfound shape as if all its life had been the darkness of dream and illusion. A countenance liquid, empty, impassive; one bird sings...

I can't quite explain it but I feel free to ride my own tide: it is a certain glory in all my thoughts and emotions, the ego's representatives. They are my coat of many colours on this earth. The same force that fathers inhibition and denial changes course within me: here I can become the song of myself.

You'd think little or nothing of the sound of rain falling on outstretched leaves, falling from leaf to leaf. You hear it every day almost. But this soft rhapsodic, my dear, always at my ear with how it will be, how it was this is really why I come to this dreaming hill station. I suppose it is the nearest I will get to home.

Kevin Crossley-Holland

INDIA

Extra-curricular activity

R. K. Narayan

V. S. NARAYANE
Premchand: His Life and Work
291pp. Vikas. £6.95.
0 7069 1091 5

Premchand was born in Lamahi, a village in Benares district, on the last day of July 1880 and lived into his fifty-seventh year. In his lifetime he produced over two hundred short stories, several full-length novels, and countless miscellaneous writings, in addition to editing one or two literary journals. Apart from a few inevitable pot-boilers, most of what he turned out was unquestionably first-rate.

The Indian Sahitya Akademi recognizes about twenty major languages for purposes of their annual literary awards. Among the languages, Urdu and Hindi may claim predominance in North India. ("North" and "South", incidentally, are relative terms. When a South Indian like myself mentions "North" he is likely to mean any station beyond twenty hours of a slow train journey, and a North Indian will call "South" all space at his back, if you assume he is facing the Himalayas.) Premchand began his writing in Urdu and in the year 1910 changed over to Hindi, being proficient in both languages. He also knew Persian, loved English literature, and enjoyed European classics in translation.

Writing as a profession, with commercial ramifications, is a comparatively recent phenomenon in my country. A writer was expected to be dedicated to his task for his own sake without seeking any reward. In my own case early in my career some elder, who was of course a well-wisher, would

enquire, "What are you doing?" When I replied, "I write," he would invariably retort, "That is all right. Of course you write, I am well aware of it, but I want to know what you are doing." There was a tacit assumption that a writer could write for pleasure, but must occupy himself usefully in other ways. Premchand had to maintain himself as a schoolteacher, later as a minor inspector of schools, and devoted all his spare hours to writing. His duties as an inspector took him deep into the country, to remote villages and hamlets, and he gained first-hand knowledge of people and their conditions of living - inexhaustible material for a story-writer. "I never write a story for the sake of describing incident and event," said Premchand in a symposium, "I write for only one reason: to present a human truth, or to show a new angle of looking at common and obvious things... the story's sap is psychological insight."

V. S. Narayane's *Premchand: His Life and Work*, is a full-bodied biography of a born writer, an uncompromising idealist, scholar, patriot, and a man of suffering (in a wide sense).

When Premchand was barely fifteen years old, his stepmother, who made his existence at home hellish, added to his troubles a forced marriage, to a village girl who turned out to be shockingly ugly, pockmarked, and puny, and oddly enough an opium addict too. Premchand could hardly bear the sight of her, and also had to watch helplessly his stepmother's ill-treatment of her. After a time he persuaded her to go back to her parents; later on he answered a matrimonial advertisement, liked the photograph of the girl, and married her in 1906. "My first wife died in 1904",

Premchand wrote. "She was an unfortunate woman. ... After her death I married a child widow, and I am very happy with her. She has developed interest in literature and sometimes writes stories." It turned out to be a happy marriage lasting thirty years. Shivarani, the second wife, lived for thirty-five years after Premchand's death; she wrote many stories and a memoir entitled, *Premchand: In the Home*.

Shortly after his second marriage Premchand was promoted as the Sub-Deputy of Schools and transferred to a place called Mhoba in Hamir District. It was a welcome change, since his salary was increased from thirty-five to fifty rupees a month (about three pounds sterling at the present rate of exchange).

The passing of the Rowlett Act in 1919, which prohibited all forms of political activity and freedom of expression, was a particularly odious measure that exacerbated Indian feelings, and what seemed a colossal outrage was committed when the army opened fire on a crowd of Indians cornered in a narrow lane at Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar. Premchand felt the conditions of serfdom under British rule to be intolerable. His writings reflected more and more the agony and helplessness of the individual. He was warned that a collection of his stories entitled *Soz-i-Watan* ("Burning Patriotism") was seditious, and copies were confiscated. He was also warned by his officers that in future he could publish nothing without government permission. In February of 1920 when Mahatma Gandhi visited Gorakhpur and addressed a public meeting, a quarter of a million people attended it, and among the audience was Premchand (though he was ill) with his wife and two children. "When he returned home, he was a changed man", to quote Professor Narayane. He felt it would be impossible to continue in government service and resigned his job.

In June 1936 *Godan* was published, and it is considered to be his masterpiece. "*Godan* has been conceived on an epic scale. It has in fact been described as a *mahakavya* (epic) of the Indian farmer's life... the most heart-rending and unforgettable picture of the Indian village offered in Indian literature." It was begun in 1932 and published in 1936, at a time when the author realized that his health was failing. He submitted himself to medical tests, which revealed diabetes, dropsy, and hardening of the liver. Premchand knew that his end was coming, but he had the satisfaction of seeing *Godan* received by his public with tremendous enthusiasm. On October 8, 1936 he died.

Flora Annie Steel was confident that she could have governed the Punjab better than the Lieutenant-Governor. Katherine Mayo is another reformer but, as Saros Cowasjee says in his introduction, "the venom of things through Mayo's portrayal while Steel's is faced with sympathy and understanding." Again, there is a misunderstanding. Between them, but Katherine Mayo - the only American contributor to *Stories From the Raj* - does not share the cosmic nihilism of Woolf and Forster; her "note of venom" recalls some Evangelicals before the Mutiny, out of temper with the perversity and wickedness of heathens who would not listen.

It is a good selection. Sara Jeannette Duncan's story "A Mother in India" is a minor gem, though it has little to do with India. The mother - ironic and perceptive - is devoted to her husband and hardly meets her daughter until she is twenty, when she finds her humourless, direct and insensitive - but was that really due to separate upbringing in the service of Empire, or to genetic quirk? This story, and those by Alice Perrin, invite the reader to further acquaintance with writers who are little known and by themselves would justify the collection. But everything is readable; it is all good entertainment.

The two pieces by Orwell - "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant" - are well-known and illustrate the remarkably swift change in the English outlook since "The Head of the District". Indeed, it might be argued that the whole collection tells us as much about England as about India.

Glancing westward

H. R. F. Keating

G. D. KHOSLA
Never the Twin
177pp. Vikas. £5.95.
0 7069 1270 5

DOLLY THAKORE
The Eccentricity Factor
88pp. Vikas. £4.95.
0 7069 1165 2

ARUN JOSHI

The Last Labyrinth
224pp. Orient Paperbacks. Available from Publications India 112 Whitfield Street, London W1M 6JD. £1.90.

It has been suggested that the novel is an art form not altogether suited to the Indian mind. Yet up and down the length of the sub-continent typewriters click and pens scratch as novels pour out, the majority in India's various languages, seldom translated into tongues more widely understood, a good many in English - Indian-Anglian novels as they are unpleasantly called - but achieving no publication outside India. Some of the latter are designed strictly for local readership and cannot be of much interest to the outer world. But others repay the Western reader, both for themselves, for what is universal in them, and for the very different world they can plunge us into. And, though they come from Indian publishing houses, they can generally be obtained from the scattering of Indian bookshops in this country.

Some seem, indeed, to be written with more than half an eye on a Western readership. G. D. Khosla's *Never the Twin* is a case in point; set partly in Cambridge in the 1920s, the novel is by a man now old, but a passionate, thwarted love affair with an English girl, it calls to mind some intense French or Russian nineteenth-century novella. But its attention to a British readership goes further than setting and heroine. Khosla is apt to digress into explanations of, for instance, the virtues of the joint family system, and this detracts somewhat from his novel without greatly enlarging our understanding of such different ways of conducting life.

Khosla was a judge before he became a novelist. He worked his way into fiction only gradually, first by writing in his early retirement accounts of his most notable cases, such as *The Murder of the Mahatma*, then by essays on other aspects of Indian life and politics, before finally turning to the novel. But, unlike many writers expert in non-fictional modes, he is a true novelist and produces scenes that

flare into life in the mind as effectively as one could wish - and this despite the fact that his language is old-fashioned in a way that only English spoken in India can be.

Another novel, much more up-to-date in language and setting, which seems, too, to be casting a sideways glance at the Western reader is Dolly Thakore's *The Eccentricity Factor*. This is a tale of bureaucratic intrigue; a C. P. Snow novel in miniature with a tinge of John le Carré. Plainly designed to warn Indian readers of the dangers that spring from New Delhi behaviour, its slight story is interlarded with extracts from newspaper columns upon which it forms an apt, credible commentary. Yet every now and again one comes across a sentence such as "We Indians feel awkward during a silence", seemingly addressed to the Westerner. But, this apart, *The Eccentricity Factor* gives a Western reader a picture of a very different milieu, whether in glimpses of the scores of semi-idle clerks that are, if not a necessary, at least an inescapable part of the functioning of government in India or in a sharp scene of a minister lunching amid sycophants off Wedgwood china marked with his own initials.

The hero of Arun Joshi's *The Last Labyrinth* is a businessman, owner of a plastics factory, and half the novel is set in cosmopolitan Bombay. Indeed, this same hero, a man crying always "I want. I want. I want" and not knowing what it is he desires, is in some ways a facsimile of Saul Bellow's Henderson. His search, though, takes him not to a merely old Africa but to an infinitely old Benares, centre not simply of Indian mysticism but of the altogether intangible, at once holy and repellent.

The whole is constructed to a strongly symbolic scheme (Bombay versus Benares, plastic buckets set against earthenware pitchers) and the one imagines, in something more sympathetic to the Indian than to the Western mind. Yet to immerse oneself in an alien way of thought is a salutary revelation. Again, there is contempt for the rigidities of time. It is expressed here, however, not in unnoticed anachronisms but in the method of narration, which will drop in a name pages ahead of the appearance of its owner, bringing an eventual and rewarding sense of discovery (the method can be found equally in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*).

Were a book such as this not well written it would perhaps fall to appeal to a Western mind. But in Arun Joshi's hands we are swept into the unknown. He can bring off the telling phrase ("Wails and threats fell about us like ticker tape") and he can produce the convincingly vivid scene with equal ease.

Constructing a capital

J. M. Richards

ROBERT GRANT IRVING

Indian Summer: Lutyens, Baker, and Imperial Delhi
406pp. Yale University Press. £20.
0 300 02422 3

When King George V proclaimed at his Durbar in 1911, to a public still confident, in Britain at least, about the long-term future of British rule in India, that Imperial India was to have a new capital, the widespread impression was that the move from Calcutta was a notion conceived either by the then Secretary of State for India Lord Crewe or the Viceroy Lord Hardinge. But, of Robert Grant Irving makes plain in *Indian Summer*, such a move had been put forward on and off since Warren Hastings had proposed it in 1782. Its strongest subsequent advocates were Lord Canning at the time of the Mutiny (when India was in fact for a short time governed from Allahabad), Sir Stafford Northcote in 1867 and Lord Lytton when he proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress ten years later. Those who opposed it included the Duke of Wellington and Disraeli, both of whom insisted that the capital must remain accessible to the Navy, because of his personal involvement when he was Viceroy in silting the grandiloquent Victoria Memorial at Calcutta.

The choice of Delhi as the location of the new capital, if it can be ascribed to one man, must be credited to Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, the Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council when Lord Minto followed Curzon in 1905. Fleetwood Wilson persuaded Lord Kitchener, then commander-in-chief, who said that when he was appointed Viceroy (which he expected but in which he was disappointed), "the capital of India will be on the ridge at Delhi".

It is not in fact on the ridge, for reasons explained at length in *Indian Summer*, but on the plain south of Shah Jahan's walled city between the southern ridge and the Jumna river. Irving's chapters describing the 150-year-long arguments about the continuing suitability of Calcutta and the subsequent manoeuvrings, involving the Viceroy and his advisers and the India Office in London, about the exact siting of the capital buildings at Delhi, constitute the most valuable sections of his book. They throw some

fascinating sidelights on the English approach to matters of architecture and planning, showing for example how the same absence of intelligent patronage that architecture suffers from today nearly caused New Delhi to be as commonplace in its design as most of our own recent official buildings.

It was again Fleetwood Wilson who insisted that the best available architects and planners should be appointed. The initial proposal was that this grand undertaking, the fulfilment of the dreams of successive sovereigns and viceroys, should be placed in the hands of a committee consisting of the Deputy Commissioner for the Punjab, the Superintendent Engineer of the Jumna canal and the consulting architect to the Government of Bombay. The author of the bizarre recommendation was Sir John Lubbock, then Member of the Viceroy's Council, who had been appointed to get the New Delhi project under way immediately after King George V's proclamation in 1911. He was supported at first by the Viceroy Lord Hardinge, who however decided on reflection that better qualified experts should be sought in Britain and who eventually became one of Lutyens's firmest and most sympathetic allies.

Irving's later chapters, though just as thoroughly researched, are only less valuable because the story he tells of the designing and building of New Delhi and of Lutyens's unhappy disagreement with Baker, as well as his detailed description of the completed capital city, are already available in the several publications from the revived interest in Lutyens's architecture has promoted; also in Mary Lutyens's moving account of her father's life. The most useful contributions made by these later chapters are some splendid colour photographs and the passages relating to certain buildings by other architects than Lutyens and Baker which were added around the time of the inauguration of the new capital in 1931.

Even the best of these have been overshadowed by the primacy justly given to Lutyens's work, yet their architecture in several instances is quite as distinguished as Baker's. They include the garrison church, St Martin's, by A. G. Shoenstein, designed in 1923, the Roman Catholic cathedral by H. A. N. Medd (1926), St Thomas's church by W. S. George (1932), the commander-in-chief's residence (1930) and the commercial centre, Connaught Place (completed

1934), both by R. T. Russell, chief architect to the Government of India. Mercifully Irving does not carry his story further to include the ill-planned and crudely designed further commercial development that now fills - indeed congests - what little ground was left open between the new and the old Delhi.

Indian Summer, it should be made clear, is a historical account of the building of New Delhi and the events leading up to it rather than a critical evaluation. Lutyens's buildings perhaps need little criticism, especially when their original purpose is allowed for: to bear witness to the power and permanence of the British *raj*. Moreover they provide the republic that has succeeded it with a wholly appropriate government centre; only the empty forecourt by means of which the Lutyens distance Viceroy's House from the remainder of the city appears superfluous today. The aspect of New Delhi that still needs critical analysis is its vast geometrical road-plan, devised by Lutyens with contributions by H. V. Lanchester, who was called in temporarily as a consultant in 1912 and whose early involvement, ignored in most accounts, is another gap in the story that Irving usefully fills.

This geometrical layout was planned to give a monumental dignity to New Delhi on the lines of Pope Sixtus V's Rome and L'Enfant's Washington, and to link it back to the long history of successive Delhis, whose ruins litter the plain to the south and east, by aligning its avenues with distant views of surviving ancient structures; among them the Qutb Minar, the Pyram Kila and the domed mausoleum of the Emperor Humayun. But as a road-system for a modern city it has obvious defects. The only virtue of the radiating avenues whose vast and endless intersections add intolerably to the distances to be travelled, especially by the pedestrian, and make it almost impossible to locate one's position, is the shade-giving trees the planners had the foresight to provide. Its exhaustingly identical perspectives are otherwise a stiff price to pay for the splendour of Lutyens's architecture.

Indian Islamic Architecture: The Decan 1347 - 1686, by Elizabeth Schotten Merklinger (146pp, including 185 black-and-white illustrations and thirty-four plans. £18. 0 85668 193 8) is available from Aris and Phillips, Teddington House, Warminster, Wiltshire BA12 8PO. It is distributed in North America by Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey 07716, US\$48.

Autumn growths

Phillip Mason

SAROS COWASJEE (Editor)

Stories From the Raj: From Kipling to Independence
222pp. Bodley Head. £7.50.
0 370 30456 X

The stories of this collection were chosen "primarily for their literary qualities and only secondarily for their social importance" but they are intended to illustrate "interaction between the British and Indian people". The time span is only sixty years: the first story in the book appeared in 1888, when the Indian National Congress was three years old; the sixty years thus covers not the high summer but the autumn of the Indian Empire, the growth of nationalism, the long processes of the transfer of power. In his preface Paul Theroux classifies the stories as "pro-Raj" or "anti-Raj"; they do not all fit neatly into these categories but the first that is broadly "anti" was written in 1915 (Leonard Woolf) and the last clearly "pro" in the main tradition (Maud Diver) in 1924.

Most of these stories cannot be easily defined as "pro-Raj" or "anti-Raj" because even those in favour of British rule are critical of the Government and of the impact of Western culture on Eastern culture. This is the main theme of the two Kipling stories and of all three by Flora Annie Steel. It was inevitable, because the theoretical justification for British rule in Parliament had, at least since 1833 (and arguably since Burke), been that it was a trusteeship in preparation for self-government. "Progress", which meant Western education, district councils, municipal committees, improved sanitation, was therefore cautiously encouraged from on high.

Writers of honesty and clear vision - only saw the persistence of old beliefs and the immediate ill-effects of "progress". There is a story of Flora Annie Steel's which puts the point even more starkly than those included here. In it a child wife whose husband had gone to England for three years to become a barrister laboriously acquires education in Western ways so as to please him; only to find when he returns that he prefers a pretty creature

who has concentrated on making herself attractive with henna and jasmine. The wife jumps into the well and drowns. But Mrs Steel was herself a keen reformer.

Another division exists between those who write about India with love and those who feel only a kind of weary disgust. And that too is a matter of period; Woolf, Forster, Orwell - and more recently V. S. Naipaul - see India as a mainly dark place; the earlier writers were romantics and though they were often angry and often disgusted they were also attracted; their hearts were touched, they were excited by stories of violence, revenge, love, jealousy in a way that the more recent observers have not been.

Flora Annie Steel was confident that she could have governed the Punjab better than the Lieutenant-Governor. Katherine Mayo is another reformer but, as Saros Cowasjee says in his introduction, "the venom of things through Mayo's portrayal while Steel's is faced with sympathy and understanding." Again, there is a misunderstanding. Between them, but Katherine Mayo - the only American contributor to *Stories From the Raj* - does not share the cosmic nihilism of Woolf and Forster; her "note of venom" recalls some Evangelicals before the Mutiny, out of temper with the perversity and wickedness of heathens who would not listen.

It is a good selection. Sara Jeannette Duncan's story "A Mother in India" is a minor gem, though it has little to do with India. The mother - ironic and perceptive - is devoted to her husband and hardly meets her daughter until she is twenty, when she finds her humourless, direct and insensitive - but was that really due to separate upbringing in the service of Empire, or to genetic quirk? This story, and those by Alice Perrin, invite the reader to further acquaintance with writers who are little known and by themselves would justify the collection. But everything is readable; it is all good entertainment.

The two pieces by Orwell - "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant" - are well-known and illustrate the remarkably swift change in the English outlook since "The Head of the District". Indeed, it might be argued that the whole collection tells us as much about England as about India.

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Tour de farce

Alan Ross

SEYLD BERRY

Crickets Wallah with England in India 1981-2
192pp Hodder and Stoughton. £8.95.
0 340 28087 5

Seyld Berry has made the best of a bad job. A bad job, because when he undertook to write a book on the 1981/82 MCC tour of India he had no possible means of knowing that it would turn out to be one of the most boring and pointless series in the history of Test cricket. India, having, by the first prognostications, won the first Test in Bombay by 138 runs, sat on their lead; and England, growling at unpurging decisions and unimaginatively led, failed thereafter to mount any real sort of challenge. All five remaining Tests never looked for a moment like ending up as anything but the timest of draws. Overs were bowled at tortoise-like speed on parched, dead, pitchless, and batted on both sides accumulated the vast quantities of runs with only the whole, squinting thoroughness of a country so infatuated by and hungry for cricket as India could have

tolerated it, let alone turned up in their hundreds of thousands day after deadly day.

Berry has, understandably, so little heart for describing these appalling contests that he has relegated their accounts to an appendix, making his accounts of the individual Tests mercifully vague. Stuck, however, with the prospect of a book on his hands, he has sensibly allowed the Tests to fade into little more than dim panels on the screen of Indian cricket history. Instead of dutiful and detailed analysis of the cricket - and I am not sure that technical analysis is his strong point - Berry has settled for a lively ride through India on the coast-tails of the cricketers. He writes vividly about the countryside, the trains, the hotels, the gossip, the feel of the different cities and their cricket arenas. By the end of it all, the reader has discovered the geography of grounds - by which I mean, incidentally, themselves both on and off the cricket field.

Although Burgess, the first Indians to turn to cricket seriously, toured England as long ago as 1888, it was only fifty years ago that India was granted Test status and played against England at Lord's. Maharashtra, of varying ability, had produced sides to play MCC as early as 1911. But the Indian cricketers of the 1930s, many of whom

I saw play as a child in Calcutta, were the first real professionals: C. K. Nayudu, Amar Singh, Mushtaq Ali, Vijay Merchant, Mohammed Nissar.

Berry gracefully weaves the names of these great players into his narrative. He visits Jamnagar and devotes a chapter to Ranjitsinhji, though gravely underestimating the Jam Sahab's ancestry. If he had ever been to Saradar, Ranji's birthplace, he would not describe it as "a mud-and-straw village out in the sticks". Nor is it true to say that the wet wickets of 1902 brought Ranji's England career to an end.

There are errors: for example, A. F. Wensley was not Arthur Wensley, but Bert. The verb "insert", for putting opponents in, is a horrible vulgarization more suited to supposititious than cricket teams; and to suggest that shortage of money and lack of tenure on the Indian pattern was the reason for the carnival adventure into South Africa of fifteen English cricketers is pure fantasy. Mr Berry can hardly be ignorant of what players like Gooch earn a year without any consideration of fees from South African breweries.

Raman Subba Row has written an elegant foreword, and there are numerous fine photographs by Adrian Murrell.

In praise of the contingent

Patrick Gardiner

TERENCE J. GERMAN

Hamann on Language and Religion
187pp. Oxford University Press.
£12.50
0 19 826717 7

"No alchemist, no Jacob Boehme, no insane fanatic can write and speak more senseless, more unintelligible trash than what we are here forced to read." This comment on one of J. G. Hamann's early essays, which Terence German quotes from a contemporary review, was not untypical of the reception generally accorded to the various suggestive but puzzling writings Hamann published during his lifetime, a reception that tended to reflect the sense of baffled exasperation which they frequently aroused and which their author made no effort to mollify or assuage. Indeed, it might have seemed at times as if he had gone out of his way to provoke the predominantly unsympathetic response elicited by his work, often adopting a condensed and enigmatic style that could almost have been designed to grate upon the minds of readers accustomed to a smoother idiom and to more systematic modes of exposition. Thus what he produced was found to be not only disconcerting in content but also curiously difficult to read and follow – it was as if it had been composed upon some other planet. The uncomfortable message his words conveyed appeared to be accurately mirrored in the strange angularity, the epigrammatic ambiguity and allusiveness, of the manner in which he

chose to present it, and this was something that on one occasion drew even from Kant – himself hardly a master of lucidity – the pointed request that he should address him through "common concepts according to logical rules" rather than in "the divine speech of intuitive reason".

Hamann has since acquired the reputation of having been a mystic and an irrationalist, at odds with the intellectual ethos of his own age and premonitory of ideas to come. It is certainly true that he was deeply hostile to what he conceived to be the ruling assumptions and tenets of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, much of his work consisting of a sustained assault upon these: so understood, he is commonly regarded as a forerunner of later thinkers like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, both of whom were sharply critical of rationalistic ideals and of attempts to reduce the variety and individuality of human life to the bloodless categories of some comprehensive system of pure thought. Yet, as German is at pains to stress, such conceptions of Hamann's position need to be treated with caution, requiring qualification in certain crucial respects. His approach to the claims of reason was more complex than is sometimes supposed, and if he could be labelled a "mystic" it was in an idiosyncratic sense of a kind not normally associated with that term.

What Hamann singled out for attack was not so much reason as such, which had its legitimate uses, as what he considered to be its misapplication and abuse at the hands of theorists who radically misconstrued its proper role. Reason was rooted in language and language was the indispensable

medium through which people expressed themselves, not as the pallid phantoms of philosophical mythology, but as flesh-and-blood creatures in contact with a palpable reality. Language, in other words, drew its substance and strength from the rich immediacy of our sensuous experience and from the endless vitality of the human mind in absorbing that experience so as to generate fresh forms of thought and feeling – "we find the history of each race in its speech". The mind itself, moreover, was not (as the Cartesians and their successors had maintained) something set apart from the body, being on the contrary essentially bound up with it. Man, Hamann insisted, was "not created out of the air", and he showed impatience with those who sought to denigrate corporeality in a misguided effort to separate or divorce "what nature has joined together".

Along with this respect for our bodily existence went a profound reverence for the empirical world in general, a reverence that was infused with a passionate religious feeling. For Hamann it was a kind of blasphemy to portray reality in schematic terms which falsified its true character and which treated something that was inherently mysterious and unanalysable as if it could be rendered transparent to the discursive or generalizing intellect. God was neither a mechanic nor a mathematician but a poet, a creative artist whose works resisted translation into the cold formulae of Newtonian scientists or encapsulation within the abstractions of speculative metaphysicians, and whose meaning could only be discerned by a receptive and loving

attention to the concrete particularity of things. Hamann's "mysticism" – if so it may be called – involved an intense preoccupation with the irreducibly contingent and unique features of the world and a heightened awareness of these as affording a continual source of revelation or wonder. In this manner it was possible to experience every instant as if it were an image of eternity, a momentary participation in the divine life for which "there is no time" inasmuch as there "everything is present".

Such notions lie close to the heart of Hamann's doctrine of faith (*Glaube*) which he connected with the asseverations of direct experience and opposed to all ill-fated attempts to found the certainties of religion upon an allegedly rational basis. That, indeed, was the doctrine for which he acknowledged – however strangely – a profound debt to Hume, since the latter had at least clearly recognized the limitations of a *a priori* demonstration and had seen how many even of our everyday beliefs, let alone our religious convictions, depended on considerations quite other than those of logical derivation and proof. In his book German discusses these aspects of

Hamann's outlook, while at the same time illuminating their relation to further themes in his thought; he shows, for example, how they permeated his unorthodox attitudes to such matters as the problem of artistic expression and style, the understanding of history, the nature of symbolism, and the interpretation of the Scriptures themselves.

Concept by concept

D. M. Knight

P. M. HARMAN

Energy, Force, and Matter: The Conceptual Development of Nineteenth-Century Physics
182pp. Cambridge University Press.
£13.50 (paperback, £5.50).
0 521 24600 8

problem is how a critical theory can tell if it is moving in the right direction, without knowing its destination in advance.

The solution Geuss offers on Habermas's behalf is that critical theory has a method, one which it is committed to apply as a principle of "internal criticism" in particular situations. In the first place, a critical theory will aim to show agents causal determinants of their beliefs, of which they are at present not conscious. This it will do on the assumption that the agents addressed have standards of "reflective acceptability" for their own beliefs, such that they will reject beliefs which have been found under certain constraints. A belief is reflectively unacceptable if "it could only have been acquired under conditions of coercion". In this way genetic features of beliefs (how they are acquired) become criteria for their rationality or, more pertinently, their irrationality.

But now Geuss parts company with Habermas. What is to guarantee, he asks, that agents will, despite the fact of their alienation in other respects, apply the standard of reflective acceptability? Habermas's "transcendental argument" to the effect that "anyone we recognize as a human agent... must in some way share our views on what are conditions of freedom and what conditions of coercion" he finds unconvincing. But, if the members of a society do share the investigating critical theorist's views in this way, a gap may open up. Agents may lack the standards by which to assess their societies, and yet this lack, the critical theorist will believe, is itself a symptom of their alienation.

The more deeply seated the agents' false consciousness, the more they need emancipation, but also the more likely it is that their epistemic principles will be part of the problem and not part of their solution.

In the end – though he has no sympathy for the Hegelian concepts in which it is framed – Geuss is more attracted to Adorno's critical pessimism than to Habermas's. Pessimism is the stance of the realist who refuses to be an apologist: the optimist thinks that we live in the best of all possible worlds; the pessimist is afraid that he is right.

and also took over provinces from chemistry, natural history and astronomy, those in different countries followed different traditions. A Frenchman might well not see energy conservation or other models as so crucial in nineteenth-century physics as a German or an Englishman (using "Englishman" in a nineteenth-century manner – many eminent practitioners came from Scotland and Ireland).

Perhaps because this is a history of conceptual development, there is nothing about the "Humboldtian" physics of the first half of the nineteenth century, with its geophysical measurements (pendulums, telescopes, and chronometers taken to the ends of the earth) which would make fame and esteem to those who made them. This, with voyages of survey and natural history, was the "big science" of the day, because observations and ships cost a lot of money; the physics which Harman describes was relatively cheap throughout his period. There is also scant mention of astronomy or of spectroscopy, although these were topics which were or became extremely popular in public lectures and would have seemed very important parts of physical and mathematical science.

Except in a few captions to illustrations, one would not know from this book that physics had connections with industry, or with educational changes, or that it began to offer careers to those with suitable talents. Electric telegraphy brought fame and fortune to some physicists; while others were involved in the various great exhibitions which followed that of 1851. The wars of the nineteenth century were increasingly "scientific" because they promoted to be useful, constructively or destructively, and not because its concepts were so interesting.

The real question is whether one chooses to emphasize the differences between the sciences (and physics especially) and other human activities, or to portray science as a part of the culture of a time and place. In what Harman model study of its kind, Harman has chosen the first course; and anybody wanting a brief and judicious account of the internal development of some of the most interesting parts of nineteenth-century physics could do better than to read this book. But he should not suppose that the history of science – needs to be like *Die a Little*.

The junkyard at the *Black Association*, the manoeuvring of the agnostics of the *X* club, the publication of journals and books, the search for patronage and the hope of social mobility through examinations and publications, and the beginning of a science-based military industry – all these things lurk in the background to Harman's story. If we are serious about the history of science, we cannot neglect them.

ACTION

In and out of the clouds

Rosalind Belben

GERALDINE HALLS

Talking to Strangers
216pp. Constable. £6.95.
0 09 4045 60 4

Geraldine Hall's novels tend to have "backgrounds" – India, Thailand, Papua, and now Japan. But her writing is at its most succinct and cutting when her native Australia – not a background in this sense – is involved. And failing that, one of her Australian characters, deployed in a "background", is the next best thing.

The character in *Talking to Strangers* is handsome, middle-aged Ebba, truly a disastrous woman, who is treated throughout as if from a standpoint of sympathy and approval: only by the end does the reader see that this view of Ebba is also very harsh and unflattering. Like Ebba, who realizes the consequences of her actions too late, we are lulled into thinking her judgment, of stray men in particular, and her perceptions regarding her husband and strong-willed mother, are to be respected. But, alone in Tokyo hotels, waiting for her husband to join her, out of reach metaphorically and communicating by means of an uncommunicated, dislocated correspondence, Ebba, though a seasoned traveller, suffers from a kind of shipboard unreality. Yet the reader

ultimately fears that Ebba has always been terribly nice and a walking calamity.

Innocent she may be, but her sizing-up of strangers is evidently faulty. And innocence is no excuse when a muddle with two letters, the dispatching of the wrong, spiced-filled draft, causes her mother in Adelaide to have a stroke. "You have no constancy and you never learn from your mistakes", says her husband, for whom she shows an odd lack of understanding when he is himself apparently stranded, ill, in New Zealand. As she is keenly aware of a mysterious rift between them, her own hurt and bewilderment are uppermost in her mind. Geraldine Halls has written before about the painful stupidity of intelligent women, and the rings men run round them. Dinah, in *The last summer of the men*, could be in some ways a younger version of Ebba.

A subtle, unemphatic method, with a dry wit, produces a certain *frisson*; and, if the reader is willing to persevere, a degree of resonance. That said, one hopes there may be more to novels than what is often admired as an "unobtrusive" style, interesting backgrounds, and some fraught moments which, vicious in their lightness and the speed of their coming, devastate a victim who has spent so long waiting and comprehending.

Talking to Strangers is dull, undemanding and decorous. The

language is serviceable, a plain and reliable instrument; no more. The craft is very conscious; the dialogue, expert. (The letters, however, are pretty similar, considering they are "written" by different people.) The scenery of Japan and the person of Ebba seem to have been welded together – too obviously observed or imagined on separate occasions. The eighteen-year-old marriage is scarcely credible; the fact that Ebba and her English husband Adrian ever lived under the same roof seems hazy conjecture, so feeble is the current of their relationship; although, looking back to their recent and dreadful visit to Adelaide, we do see the two together. In order, possibly, to fulfil the double meaning of the title, the husband must be seen to have been, once, not a stranger.

"Higher! Higher!" cried William excitedly. Quick! Quick! You must see it! It will be gone. He took hold of her chin and thrust back her head. There almost on the roof of the sky was the fabled mountain.

The description which follows is impeccably restrained and rather beautiful. Yet that glimpse Ebba has of Mount Fuji through the clouds, in the company of an unsuitable man she has struck up a friendship with, and who, or so she later thinks, uses her as a foil for their in a netlike shop, is cruelly apt as a measure of the distance which divides *Talking to Strangers* from the work of inspiration it never really attempts to be.

Airless inventions

William Logan

DON SKILES

Miss America
159pp. Marion Boyars. £6.95.
0 7145 2755 6

In the title story of this very odd first collection, a man wakes one morning to find Miss America in his bedroom, demanding breakfast. This appearance or *debüt* suggests the situation of contemporary American fiction: ignoring the literary history that might nourish or control its impulses, it carries Emersonian self-reliance to its radical conclusion, becoming a record of the author's most circumscribed imaginings. The man upon whom Miss America, like some latter-day Athena, bestows her presence is befuddled and middle-aged; but rather than instilling him with sexual or martial prowess, she seems to have no effect at all. It is no wonder that, except for a trifling sexual encounter, her stay is uneventful.

All of Don Skiles's stories are uneventful, and are impeded in their narrative movement by the accumulation of irrelevances – bizarre anecdotes culled from newspapers, shards of personal history, a letter from an old girlfriend. These details, having no organic relation to a story, reduce it to a series of fits and starts. Four of his fictions, inevitably the weakest, consist of remarks which circle an unspecified occasion like a galaxy orbiting its black hole. This free association does, however, seem relevant to Skiles's central theme – the Californian.

At first glance some stories have a Borgesian fancy. A man is attacked by a bowl of soup. An author's successive dust-jacket photographs compound falsity on falsity, persona on persona. A bar frequented by argumentative, unsuccessful writers is disrupted by the appearance of Toulouse-Lautrec. The translation of Borges to California has a peculiar attractiveness, for nowhere else in America is eccentricity cultivated so assiduously. Unfortunately, and unlike Borges, Skiles is wholly unable to take advantage of his inventions. The attack by the bowl of soup, prominently announced in the first sentence of the story, in fact comes down to the presence of a bit of glass. The various false landscapes and attires of the

booklet photos are duly listed, but the author is not revealed as a fabulously metamorphic figure. "Toulouse-Lautrec" is merely an ordinary man with an extraordinary name, who after months of observing the quarrelling writers dispenses trivial advice. Each story, having begun with an idea, expires in narrative.

In tale after tale, a graceless and unimaginative prose renders the characters stupefyingly dull. There is not a challenging sentence in the book. Paragraphs doddle senselessly along:

Of course, the underlying reality of my own deception was that I was, indeed, gathering material. But, at that time, I now suspect that I sat there to gather women, if any were available. Failing that, I hoped, obscurely, to meet either a kindred soul, preferably literary, but with less talent than me, or some editor or publisher, who would solicit a manuscript from me, which he (or, even better, a young lovely she) would call me about three days later

Awkward constructions, misspellings ("inquired," "antillizing," "whisp") and grammatical errors ("one could hope to meet another writer, or even a poet, although the latter had a curious habit of keeping to themselves," "Where did, or where rather, has he gone?") suggest that Skiles does not have much of an ear (or eye) for English.

There is in these stories something of the aimlessness of California life, a sense of the amount of time spent indoors in ceaseless self-examination. The most flattering suspicion one could have about Skiles is that his gracelessness is a disguise, meant not only to reproduce the authentic Californian banality but to confuse and provoke the reader. That is a form of the imitative fallacy which only a master can get away with.

Bridges in Fantasy, edited by George E. Slusser, Eric S. Rabkin and Robert Scholes (231 pp. Southern Illinois University Press, \$18.95, 0 8093 1043 0) consists of thirteen essays written for the second Eaton Conference on Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature at the University of California. The editors describe the goal of each essay as being to "investigate the ways in which [structures, contexts and themes] interact to produce a work of fantasy".

Consciously coerced

Michael Rosen

RAYMOND GEUSS

The Idea of a Critical Theory:
Habermas and the Frankfurt School
100pp. Cambridge University Press.
£10 (paperback, £3.75).
0 521 24072 7

"This book", says Raymond Geuss, "sets itself the modest task of explaining clearly what a critical theory is supposed to be." It does so splendidly. Geuss's treatment of his always complex, sometimes obscure, subject matter is incisive and suggestive.

His approach is analytical rather than historical. Critical theory is taken to be essentially what it has become in the hands of its latest master practitioners, Jürgen Habermas: an attempt to dispense social theory imitative of the natural sciences in favour of an account which will make central the tension between men as they are and men as they could become. Critical theory is cognitive; it claims to be true in a way in which quasi-scientific social theories are not. The critical theorist, in Habermas's version, is no mere gadfly but stands heir to the systematic aspirations of classical sociology: Comte, Marx, Weber and (as is becoming apparent from recent writings) Talcott Parsons.

Thus, as Geuss says, critical theory is "not just a form of 'moralizing criticism', i.e. an ideological form of consciousness is not criticized for being nasty, immoral, unpleasant, etc. but for being false, for being a form of delusion. Yet, as his intricate but illuminating first chapter explains, not all delusions can be counted as ideological. Ideological beliefs are those false beliefs (and perhaps also true beliefs not rationally held) which play a function in supporting repressive social orders, and which are held *just because* they play this function (although, of course, that is not the reason why those who hold them choose to do so).

Two consequences are apparent. First, critical theory depends on being able to relate the genesis of beliefs to their justification; it is the fact that they have come about in a certain way, not just the fact that they are empirically false, which makes beliefs ideological.

Second, it presumes some answer to the question, what makes a society repressive? Originally, Habermas's idea of repression was advanced to take the place of Marx's definition of exploitation (a relationship in which a material surplus is extracted, either by institutional mechanisms or coercion, from direct producers, and redistributed to non-producing classes). A society is repressive, for Habermas, if it frustrates its members' "true needs". These true needs include, but, crucially, are not exhausted by, material needs.

Critical theory must, then, include an account of how true needs are to be identified, for they are not something that could be derived from purely biological or physiological investigation. Geuss's answer is as follows. True needs (as opposed to such false ones as the alcoholic's need for liquor) are those which correspond to "real interests", which are defined in their turn as "those we would form in... conditions of perfect knowledge and freedom".

With this, it would seem, critical theory has caught itself in a circle: to know if we live in a repressive society, one which stands in need of critical theory, we must be able to assess it with reference to what can only be identified from a post-repressive standpoint: to criticize ideology we must, it seems, stand, prophylactically, beyond its power. But this circularity is, Geuss shows, only apparently immobilizing. We do not have to wait for a complete picture of an emancipated society before embarking on the criticism of this one:

Although we do not live in that utopia, we may be free enough to recognize how we might act to abolish some of the coercion from which we suffer and move closer to 'optimal conditions of freedom and knowledge. The task of a critical theory is to show us which way to move.

Critical theory does not have a map; it cannot give a fully worked-out route to its goal of emancipation just because what that goal is – where it is located – cannot be identified prior to the act of getting there. In that sense critical theory has to be doubly revelatory: it does not just measure existing society against a fixed standard (an "essence" to hold "appearance" up against) but claims to develop its conception of each in terms of the other. The

problem is how a critical theory can tell if it is moving in the right direction, without knowing its destination in advance.

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Keith Jeffery

THOMAS KENNEDY

Die a Little
216pp. Macmillan. £6.95.
0 333 33477 9

RICHARD HUGO

The Hitler Diaries
216pp. Macmillan. £7.95.
0 333 33620 8

One of the literary legacies of the Third Reich is an apparently unending stream of histories, biographies, picture books and thrillers, the last of which tend to draw upon either the continuing effects of wartime deceit and derring-do, or the efforts of former Nazis to evade retribution and/or conquer the world – to make the globe safe for totalitarianism, as it were. Since thriller writers generally like to create the impression that their stories take place more or less in the present – Thomas Kennedy and Richard Hugo actually provide dates in 1979 and 1980 in order to emphasize this – those of their characters who took part in the war are now inevitably becoming somewhat elderly. This poses problems if swift and violent action is to be included in the narrative. There it, one supposes, only a limited market for geriatric fist-fights, and one wonders what will happen when ex-SOE, OSS and Gestapo personnel alike have all gone to their graves, peacefully or otherwise. If the rate set in these two novels is maintained, this time cannot be far distant.

The chief character in *Die a Little* is an unnamed ex-agent, called out of retirement by the mysterious death of his old spy-master. This is connected with the betrayal of Allied agents and massacres in France during the war. The hero is pleasingly imperfect. While chasing the contemporary villains, he rattles skeletons in his own cupboard. He is too old for the job. Physical frailty plagues him more than once, and mental weariness comes through in a slightly weeping tendency to exercise manifold prejudices about modern life.

Thomas Kennedy's book is full of activity. There is plenty of travel: by fast cars up motorways, jet-like flights along the misty Pennine Way, by private aeroplanes from Dubai (not a reference to Buchan novels), with searches and pursuits in London, Edinburgh, Stratford and Birmingham. The ex-agent's emotions are coloured by memories of his

and his lover, both apparently killed during the war, nudged towards the pathetic ex-junkie hitch-hiker whom he takes under his wing, and conquered by the enigmatic Soviet agent "Tosca", deep in whose soul "innocence and ruthlessness lived side by side". Throughout the book he is threatened by a blond psychotic with a lethal aerosol, accompanied by a band of hard men who wear Rotary badges.

The blurb announces that "an immensely intricate story comes to its climax in the Middle East – and a further and final climax in England". Herein lies the book's strength and weakness. It proceeds at great pace, which certainly leaves reader and hero breathless, but bare action is not always an entirely satisfactory substitute for a coherent story-line. There is a plethora of "climaxes" (more than two), while perhaps a necessary ingredient in a pornographic novel, sits less comfortably within the covers of an intentionally perplexing thriller.

Pornography actually crops up in Richard Hugo's stylish novel. The plot hinges on the existence of a diary kept by Hitler, part of which is brought to an American publisher as bait to persuade him to part with ten million dollars in payment for the entire manuscript. The diary entry includes some comments on the course of the war which would be of value to historians, but it also recounts details of Hitler and Eva Braun indulging in activities which can only be described as impolite. Mercifully we are spared more. But the pornographic angle is merely a neat

diversionary tactic by the author. The book is full of sick and slippery red herrings – some genuinely "Red" and many simply fishy. The real interest in the diary lies in the tale it tells of treachery and intrigue between wartime leaders. This story, if revealed, would it seem "shake the stability of the post-war world".

It also, on a number of occasions, endangers the life of Jonathan Grant, an emotionless and controversial historian engaged by the publishers to check the diary's authenticity. Accompanied by an unstable but largely competent female research assistant anxious (oddly) to get a job in publishing, Grant methodically peels away the mystery and deception surrounding the manuscript. Along the way he is attacked by French rusics, kidnapped by Harlem blacks and assisted by bogus policemen. Shadowy ex-Nazis (some of them not so "ex") threaten him, and as he approaches his goal even the United States government begins to put pressure on the publishers' owners to withdraw from the deal. Whatever Grant's difficulties with personal relationships – his domestic life is a catalogue of disasters – in the face of much adversity he displays an admirable dedication to searching out the truth.

This is an accomplished first novel. Richard Hugo writes with keen wit and sharp social observation, and steadily builds up an impressive atmosphere of menace; his character's paranoia is completely justified. The book is carefully researched, and Hugo judiciously mixes solid fact with credible fiction.

Criminal proceedings

ROBERT B. PARKER

The Judas Goat
175pp. André Deutsch. £6.95.
0 233970460 0

Spenser, the Boston private eye who is fit to fit the way others are into bourbon, is hired by a crippled millionaire (in a scene that's an obvious and coarsened steal from the opening of *The Big Sleep*) to find the terrorists who injured him and killed his family when they blew up a London estate. Spenser, wisecracks, his way from Westminster Abbey to the Tivoli Gardens, and then to the Rembrandts in the Rijksmuseum, Robert B. Parker writes well, but his individual mixture of sentimentality, trackballs and violence is a taste not everyone might relish.

MICHAEL O'DONNELL

The Devil's Prison
216pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0 575 03120 6

Incurably ill retired civil servant and embittered young doctor wage miniature, but effective, crusade against the big business behind drug smuggling. The first novel from a medical man, *The Devil's Prison* begins promisingly: literate and exciting, with solid stuff on disposable syringes and the like. Subsequent developments are less convincing, as the author tries to cram fifty-seven varieties of crime novel into one set of covers.

T. J. Rinyon

The Road to Middle Earth

T. A. Shippey

Professor T. A. Shippey is ideally suited to write about his predecessor, Professor Tolkien, since he holds at present the Chair of English Language and Medieval Literature at Leeds University which Tolkien also held early in his career. Previously he taught at Oxford, overlapping chronologically with Tolkien. His familiarity with the poems and the languages which formed the main stimulus to Tolkien's imagination has meant that his book reaches the core of Tolkien's creativity and explains the secrets of his appeal in a way unmatched by any other critic. In this important critical study he shows why the appeal of *The Lord of the Rings* will be timeless: how *The Hobbit* and the early works grew from the dry soil of philology. Unlike any previous book *The Road to Middle Earth* shows how even such difficult works as *The Silmarillion* and the *Unfinished Tales* can be read enjoyably and seriously by ordinary readers. As a critical study it stands as worthy counterpart to Humphrey Carpenter's official biography.

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Curial and Guelfa

Translated by Pamela Waley

This is a translation of an anonymous fifteenth century Catalan historical romance, written between 1440 and 1460. The unknown author was thus a contemporary of Sir Thomas Malory and like him was fascinated by tales of courts and tournaments, of knights errant and fair damsels. This romance, however, is a historical novel, set in the thirteenth century, and reflects fascinating details of the personalities and events of that age as well as the interests and politics of the time in which it was written. A classic of European literature, Pamela Waley's translation now makes it accessible for the first time in English.

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